8

UNIVERSAL
INDULGENCE
OR
INDEMPNITY
FROM
INJURY
Upon Accounts of
CONSCIENCE,
The Just Right and Genuine Effect of NATURAL and
Christian Religion.

Hosea 11. 4. *I have drawn them with the cords of a man, with the bands of love.*

LONDON: Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst* at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapside*, near *Mercers-Chappel*, MDCLXXX.

To the Reader.

I Have very ſadly obſerved the great diſtreſs of Humane Affairs, through miſcarriages every way in point of Religion.

For while the Powers of this world and Eccleſiaſtick Juriſdictions take it for their Right, to impoſe by ſevere Penalties, and dreadful Cenſures, what they think fit under ſo great a name; they yet neither can aſſure any one, they are not, or do not uſe to be miſtaken in their recommendations; or that all their Authority or Power ſhall excuſe and acquit thoſe that obey them, when they appear before *Gods Tribunal*; ſo that it is impoſſible the Judgment or Conſcience ſhould have any repoſe here.

On the other ſide, ſome not only out of Recoyl for ſelf-preſervation, or out of deſign, but from Furious Wild Principles, have broken out into publick diſturbance, to make room for what they have proclaim'd, as the Kingdom of God and Chriſt, to the great ſcandal of True Religion, the imbrewing their hands very horridly in Blood, and the ſeeming Juſtification of utmoſt Rigors, againſt

any pretences of Religion, except according to Law.

Beſides all this, private Feuds and Animoſities, vehement and angry diſputes, are every where clamorous, and people hereupon in great Amuſe, what they ſhould believe or do.

Now ſince there is no doubt, all theſe evils are foreſeen by God; there is as little doubt, that there are ſure Remedies provided againſt them.

I have then upon the whole this account to give the Reader.

That the obſervation of ſo many Counter-Cries of Opinion, ſuch great Exaſperations in mens Affections, ſuch Complaints of oppreſſion of Conſcience by undue Laws, ſuch Recriminations of Faction, Sedition, Fanaticiſm, not only among Chriſtians, but among Proteſtant Chriſtians, and of the ſame Common National Intereſt, mov'd me to ſeek Retirement to ſome *Rock* of *Certainty*, that I might be at *perfect Peace upon*, in full ſatisfaction of Judgment and compoſure of Affection: and having found *Natural Religion* as certain as our *Faculties*, and *Fundamental Chriſtianity*, in moſt things of the ſame immediate certainty as Natural; in all things after due exploration, of the ſame final certainty, I am ſo far at Peace in my Judgment, as to have no doubt *WHAT IS TRUTH* in relation to Eternal Happineſs, if *ten thouſand more of Opini-*

ons

ons encompaſſed me round about; ſo far at Peace in my Affections, as not to be in Commotion with any man that gives Teſtimony to Chriſtian Charity, that he is a ſtrict obſerver of Natural Religion, and Fundamental Chriſtianity; one Eſſential Rule of both which is, *Love*, *Peace* and *Mercy* to all that are centred in this Natural Chriſtian Religion, though they may adjoyn or refuſe ſome Eccentrick *Placits* that do not harm the Foundation.

Laſtly, I am aſſur'd this very Natural Religion eſpouſed by Chriſtianity, well conſidered and obſerved, would diſarm the world of thoſe Inſtruments of Cruelty in the Cauſe of Religion, ſo extreamly abhored by it; whether uſed by angry ſupreme Powers, or unjuſtly taken up by Seditious, Ambitious or Fanatick Subjects. Which Cruelty men are fain to borrow from wild Beaſts, no ſuch being given by the Gracious Author of all things to ſo excellent a Nature as he made the *Humane*, and therefore moſt certainly not by the Redeemer, nor his Religion, who came to fill the world with Innocency, Goodneſs and Peace, after ſo great an Invaſion of Barbarity and Cruelty.

Now having found this ſatisfaction my ſelf, I make offer of it, if it may be the ſame to others, asking only Candid Interpretation in particular management, the main Principle being above the need of pardon or the Fear of Indignation.

Ad.

Advertiſement.

Although the Diſcourſe (being intended much ſhorter) is not diſtinguiſhed in the Body of it into Chapters or otherwiſe; yet that the Reader may have a guidance into the main Deſigns of it, I have prefixed this Summary of Heads of Diſcourſe following each other.

The

The Contents.

THE Introduction, Explaining the Text, and ſhewing the merciful Deſign of Chriſtianity againſt contrary appearances. The always preſent way of determining Doubts in Religion, 1. to 8.

Of Natural Religion, as ſure, as our Faculties, and the Examination of Things by it, 10. to 26.

Of Natural Religion, united by Chriſtian Religion to, and with it ſelf, as the only Aſſurance and Teſt of Revealed Religion, and of the little value of Ceremonies in Religion either Natural or Chriſtian, 27. to 45.

Of Natural Religion, the only ſtandard of Humane Pœnal Laws in Religion, 45. to 79.

Of the great uſe of Natural Religion, in compoſing, and deciding Differences in Chriſtian Religion, applied to ſome of the greateſt Controverſies in it, 80, 82.

Of the firſt Principle of Peace in Chriſtianity it ſelf; The important Honourable Buſineſs, given as one Rule to walk by, wherein it engages all its Diſciples; ſeveral ways producing peace, 88, to 94.

Of the grand Principles of the Union of Chriſtians into one Body, on which love and peace are infallibly to enſue, 95, to 99.

Of Hereſie, and the nature of it, cutting off from that Union, exemplified in Popery, and whether the Roman *Society be a True Church. Of Schiſm, and its nature, as it cuts off from the Body of Chriſt,* 99, to 110.

Of the Laws for Chriſtians, being imbodied in a Catholick Church; in particular Congregations or Churches; and the Order of Both to National Chriſtian Conſtitutions. Of the great

great value the word of God gives to Publick National Religion, requiring our utmoſt attemperation of our ſelves to it conſiſtently with conſcience. Of the Peace of Chriſtianity in relation to the Miniſterial preſidency of it; in relation to Magiſtracy, to Univerſal Goodneſs, 121, to 127.
A Lamentation over the World's unhappineſs in relation to ſo excellent a thing as Religion, and Chriſtian Religion, 127.
An Offerture for the Amicable Return of all Proteſtants one to another within our Engliſh Nation, and the Methods of it, 136.

ERRATA.

PAGE 2, l. 28. r. *action.* p. 7. l. 25. for *thus*, r. *that.* p. 17, l. 17. blot *them.* p. 23, l. 1, for *them* r. *that.* l. 5. for *it ſelf*, r. *themſelves.* p. 27. l. 32. r. *appellation,* p. 91. l. 37. for *they* r. *that.* p. 109. l. 7. blot *why.* l. 10. blot *who being.* p. 122. Marg. r. Ναὶα. p. 141. l. 7. r. done.

ISA. XI. 6, 7, 8, 9.

The wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child ſhall lead them. And the cow and the bear ſhall feed, their young ones ſhall lie down together: and the lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the ox. And the ſucking child ſhall play on the hole of the aſp, and the weaned child ſhall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They ſhall not hurt, nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth ſhall be full of the knowledg of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.

THIS Context is a high and eloquent Declaration of the excellent, peaceable, and benign Temper that Chriſtianity introduces into the world, under the emblem of a general pacification between the mighty and the weak, the armed and unarmed, the noxious and innocent, the oppreſſive and oppreſſed parts of the Creation.

And whether we look upon it as a deſcription riſing out of the Rules and Principles, whoſe natural and genuine effect where ever they take, will be ſuch as is here drawn out; or whether it be alſo a Prophecy of what ſhall in ſome time at leaſt come univerſally to paſs, that there ſhall be

ſuch a noble experiment of true Chriſtianity in the world, as we have great reaſon to believe there ſhall: And ſo whether the effect ſhall be throughout to converſion, and the truly Chriſtian change; or whether it ſhall only ſmooth and poliſh many men who have not the true Grace of God within, but ſhall be aſham'd in *ſuch a land of light to deal perverſly*, *and not to behold the majeſty of the Lord*, in that tranſcendent Goodneſs and Grace he appears in, both in the Commands and great Exemplar of; yet ſo that there ſhall be a multitude of ſincere Converts to that ſtate.

Iſa. 26. 10.

However we expound either of theſe, they are both alike to the diſcourſe intended; it being undoubted that Chriſtanity alwaies lays the grounds and reaſons, gives the commands, and urges the precepts, inſpires the temper here deſcrib'd, and doth moſt effectively in all times upon many, (though few comparatively,) and in all reaſonable hope ſhall upon the generality in ſome time ſo prevail in the world, that all that Belluine, Ferocious, and Salvage Temper of men ſhall be put off, and proſcribed the world; the hearts of men being either truly chang'd by the Grace of God, or univerſally ſo far convinced by high conſiderations and over-comming light (*for the knowledg of the Lord ſhall cover the earth, as waters do the ſea*); that at leaſt they will not diſcover that *Leonine*, and *Wolviſh Temper*; that cruelty and venome ſo natural to mens hearts in this ſinful and degenerate ſtate.

And this extends not only to the ſuperſeding the *cruelty of action*, *oppreſſion*, *ſpoyling of goods*, *impriſonment*, *Maſſacres*, *martyrdoms*, and all ſort of *Tortures*; but to the taking away that *poyſon of Aſps* that is in mens lips, *the Lyon-like teeth* of ſlanders, and invective, the *ſwords* and *knives* of *cruel mockings* and *Revilings* men offer one to another in the management of Religious Controverſies.

For theſe things the Prophet ſpeaks of, are eſpecially to be underſtood with reſpect to Religion, as men are upon their

their hatred to true Religion, or the mutual differences in it, become *Lions*, *Leopards*, and *Tygers* in their executions; *Cockatrices*, *Aſpes*, and *Scorpions* in their *bitter words* and *Anathema's*. All which according to the influences of Chriſtianity upon mens minds declared in this *Prophecy*, ſhall be taken out of the world; except upon the account of thoſe things alone, which will be cauſes of mens *eternal damnation* at the *Tribunal* of *God* and Chriſt, if the infliction be Spiritual; or ſuch *iniquities* as God hath indeed commanded to be puniſhed by a *Judg* in this world, if the ſentence be temporal. Of ſuch a change as is here ſet out, the *Apoſtle Paul* was a great and remarkable inſtance, whoſe converſion as it hath been thought a *prophetic* Pattern of the calling of the *Jews*, ſo (it may be as well thought) of this happy tranſmutation of the world, moſt probably concurrent with it, if either be univerſal, as we have reaſon to hope; for he was taken in the very manner of a *fierce and wild beaſt* breathing *out threatnings*, and *ſlaughter* againſt *the Diſciples of the Lord*, and immediately turned into a meek, merciful, tender, and compaſſionate *Lamb*, over whom at his converſion there *ſhone a light round about* him, in reſemblance of this *knowledg of the Lord that ſhall cover the earth*; at the *brightneſs* of which they that *journeyed* with him, *ſtood ſpeechleſs*, which might allegorize the making tame even thoſe in ſuch a day of Divine Appearance that are no true Converts. Acts 9. 1.

Now this Apoſtle (as we know) ever after breath'd nothing but the *Love*, *Meekneſs*, and *gentleneſs of Chriſt*, in himſelf; and offers in all his writings to inſpire it into others, as we ſhall have abundant occaſion in the progreſs of this diſcourſe to obſerve; ſevere in nothing, but what was irreconcilable with this excellent Chriſtian ſpirit.

Object. Before I paſs on, I ſhall only remove one Objection, which may ſeem a very great one, *viz.* That our

Saviour ſaith by way of ſurprize upon any ſuch expectations, *Suppoſe ye that I am come to ſend or give peace on the earth? Think not ſo, I came not to ſend peace on the earth; I tell you, nay; but rather diviſion, and a ſword and a fire; For I am come to ſet a man at variance*, &c. *and from henceforth there ſhall be five in one houſe, divided three againſt two, and two againſt three*, &c.

Mat. 10.3, 4. &c. Luke 12.51. &c.

Anſw. In anſwer to this, we may eaſily perceive our Saviour in this place ſpeaks neither his own intention and deſign, nor the proper tendency and rational effect of his Doctrine; for in that ſenſe he ſaith to his Diſciples, attempting to imitate the *fiery zealot ſpirit*, *Ye know not what ſpirit ye are of:* for the Son of man comes not in a Chariot of fire to deſtroy all that will not be of his Religion; for he came not to *deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them*, Luk. 9.55,56.

In this place therefore, he only ſignifies what would ariſe through the great Corruption of man, whoſe luſts and paſſions would be apt to ſwell and rage at ſo excellent a Doctrine, ſo deſtructive to ſin, and to all falſe Religion, defended by long poſſeſſion, and ancient Tradition, and compoſed for the Patronage of mens luſts. Hence men would be implacably ſet againſt the Religion of Chriſt, and would be divided with extreme hate from thoſe that eſpouſed it as their chief intereſt and happineſs, and not be drawn to *Apoſtatize* from it, though it gathered upon them the ſpite and rabid Inclinations of the world in general, and of their neareſt Relations in particular. Indeed the prophane, and enemies of Chriſtianity, are wont to cry out againſt Religion on ſuch occaſions, as if it wrought all the miſchief in ſuch caſes, when it is their own wickedneſs that *troubles things*; as *Solomon* ſays, *The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way, and then his heart fretteth againſt the Lord.*

This then abates nothing from the grand Importance of

of theſe words, which I ſhall endeavour ſo to diſcourſe, as to ſhew that Chriſtianity lays down thoſe Foundations of Unity, Peace and Kindneſs upon Religious Accounts, as are ſufficient in the Nature and Reaſon of them to take off all manner of Barbarity, Fierceneſs and Malignity in actions and words concerning Differences in Religion; ſo that there ſhould be no *hurting* and *deſtroying*, but what is juſt, and deſerved puniſhment of evil; Evil truly and really ſo, and not different Religions only, without that natural real evil, much leſs different apprehenſions in the ſame Religion, almoſt, if not altogether unavoidable; nor ſhould the names of Contumacy, Faction, Sedition, be a ſalvo, or ſhelter ſufficient for men to cover their Cruelties under, directed indeed againſt different ſenſe in Religion, whatever elſe they pretend.

And if the true meaſures given us by the Goſpel were obſerved and purſued, they would certainly and effectively reconcile mankind in general, and Chriſtians among themſelves in particular, removing all Animoſities, and making them moſt tender, compaſſionate and benign one towards another, even towards them that are not yet come to the knowledg of the Chriſtian Truth, much more to them that profeſs that Truth with themſelves, though they diſſent in ſome things, wherein they are taught by their profeſſion to do it with modeſty, *eſteeming and preferring one another* in *honour each* above *themſelves*, even then when they cannot in their particular diſtant ſentiments part with that they are perſwaded is Truth. For if obſtinacy, contumacy, pride or ſingularity ſhall be charg'd upon one another by each differing party, and purſued with penalties by the ſtronger, and theſe faultineſſes pretended to be the things only againſt which the Auſterities are levell'd, and not the difference in judgment; yet if there be no other ſtandard to judg of theſe truly culpable things, and that indeed deſerve the humane ſeverity due to them in all other caſes, as

well

well as differences in Religion, if any other but God, who knows mens hearts could judg of them; but if there be, I ſay no other detection of them but this, That the one Diſſenter cannot come over in judgment to the other; that is, the Inferiour to the Superiour in power eſpecially; the caſe is ſtill the ſame, that all muſt come to one opinion, or maligning one another ſtill continue, not profeſſedly for the diſſent, but for thoſe other evils, of which yet that diſſent ſhall be the only proof, and accounted ſufficient proof too.

I would therefore by divine Aſſiſtance endeavour ſo to manage this Diſcourſe, as to ſecure it from ſuch eluſion. I confeſs the undertaking, as it is of great moment, ſo is very difficult; and whoever conſiders what hath continually been done in the world, and how things of this nature have been intangled and perplexed, would not believe there ſhould be any ſuch Rules of prevention in nature, or that God hath deſign'd any ſuch for the good of mankind, and by meaſuring from what is paſt to future expectation, may look upon any Diſcourſe to ſuch a purpoſe as *Utopian* and Imaginary. Seeing the Chriſtian Religion ſo humble, peaceable, modeſt and amicable, and that hath the only true Rules of this Peace, hath yet been ſo unſucceſsful herein, that as at the firſt it was the *Butt* againſt which all ſorts of Cruelty and Barbarity diſcharg'd themſelves in the *Confeſſors* and *Martyrs* of it; ſo ſince, it hath been made the ſeat of thoſe *unholy holy Wars*, *perpetual Controverſies* and *Diſputes* carried on with *great wrath and clamour*; and worſe than that, a kind of *Aceldama*, or *Field of blood*, by the horrid and unnatural furies of Chriſtians one againſt another.

But to conclude from hence, True Religion and Chriſtianity hath not a fitneſs, or leſs of fitneſs, than falſe Religion to beget in mens minds that Amity, Union, and Peace ſpoken of, by fixing ſuch principles and fundamentals,

tals, as Christians might concenter upon, notwithstanding their various senses in many things; and by induing them with such a *spirit of wisdom as is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits*, is to take off the load from the Degeneracy and Corruption of humane nature, and to charge it upon the most excellent thing in the world, *Religion*, and *Christian Religion*, whose very Excellency is the true and only reason why Corruption, and all the malice of Hell planted themselves against it with all the force they could to have bar'd it out of the world; and when it prevailed against those *Gates of Hell*, and setled it self, then to *adulterate*, *debauch* and *divide* it; which attempts, and the resistance to them, hath made it fuller of commotion and noise, than false Religion; which being held in peace by Sin and Satan, as their intire and undivided Territory (no sound of true Religion coming in), there is not that reason for a disturbance.

There is therefore no Argument of moment to be drawn from hence against the *Christian* or *Reformed Protestant Religion* from the divisions of the Teachers and Professors of it; for it being demonstrated (as it may very plainly be) that it is not from the nature of Religion it self; it then remains, it is only from the pravity of men, and design of *Satan*, who are not so concern'd against any other Religion, not feeling that destruction from any but it. Thus therefore the waves and storms beat more vehemently against the Rock of Truth; that there is more rage, and foam, and froth about it is not from the unquietness of the Rock, which is always firm and still, but from the unruliness of the waves.

Nor is the *dead Sea* of a *false Religion*, or a *total Ignorance* in Religion, because it hath a *dead calm* upon it, *like the blood of a dead man*, more safe than these Religious Commotions; *for every living soul dyeth in that:* There is certain Death there; but motion argues Life, and

Rev. 16. 3.

and tendeth to it; though there are other hazards appertaining to motion, yet ſtill there are poſſibilities of life. A Fever is a degree of Cure, compared with a Lethargy; and diſſents, if well and Chriſtianly moderated by
Dan. 12. 4. *the running to and fro of mens underſtandings*, increaſe Knowledg, maintain Action and concern in Divine Things, refine Doctrines and Profeſſions (which elſe like ſtagnated waters are apt to corrupt) make more evidently appear, that which cannot *be ſhaken:* This indeed is not to be applied to abſolutely neceſſary and fundamental points of Faith, Worſhip, or Practiſe; for though by oppoſition they alſo are much fortified and confirmed, yet that is by Supreme Power, *bringing good out of evil, but none may do evil that good may come*; nor doth it introduce *Scepticiſm* in any thing we ought to know, but every man *abounding in the ſenſe of his own mind*, offers his own, and
1 Theſ. 5 21. receives the Reaſon of others, *proving all things, and holding faſt what he finds beſt*; with all toleration and condeſcenſion to thoſe that think differingly from him.

I come therefore now to the main of the Diſcourſe; and to make good, that the Nature, Conſtitution, and Rules of Chriſtian Religion are moſt exactly prepared to ingenerate, promote, and eſtabliſh love, peace and quietneſs among men, even *Univerſal* and *Oecumenical peace*, but eſpecially among Chriſtians, and that by the moſt compendious Authority, *viz.* the *word* that is *nigh to us* in *Scripture*, and *true* and *undoubted reaſon*, without going *up into Heaven*, or *down* into *the deep*, or *ſending beyond the Sea*, or turning over voluminous Writings of Ancients, Church-Hiſtory, Tradition, which perplex things with endleſs intricacies; for before any one can with due rational ſatisfaction receive them, he muſt for himſelf ſearch them; and when he hath done, compare, and be able by ſagacity to find out the true Genius of the Writer, and diſtinguiſh what is ſincere, from things ſpurious and counterfeit.

But

But ſuppoſe a man well ſatisfied herein; yet ſtill how various are interpretations? and what contrary ſenſes do the ſame periods yeild to ſeveral Readers? and when all is agreed that can be agreed, it is incertain, except things are brought to a higher teſt, wherein the peccancy and lubricity, the overſight and weakneſs of humane nature have had place, or what hath been conducted by the Word and Spirit of God by true Wiſdom, according to the pure and chaſt Laws of Chriſtianity.

So that though all knowledg, and learning, reading, and acquaintance with the records of elder times, be moſt valuable, and to be deſir'd in its due place; yet as to the aſcertaining our minds in what concerns us, not only to everlaſting Happineſs, but to preſent Peace; God hath *provided better for us*, and within a nearer compaſs, wherein our ſearch cannot be too curious or induſtrious, but within leſſer room, for ſuch a kind of acurate ſe rch as is due to the Scripture, which in ſhort gives *us the concluſion* of all matters neceſſary to life and godlineſs in preſent, would be more than the moſt of mankind have either leiſure, patience, or skill for; if extended upon the *monuments of antiquity*, ſo variouſly inſiſted upon for the finding out what men very often have a mind to find out in them, rather than fairly to take what is offered by them.

But the things I ſhall preſent as Chriſtian foundations of univerſal Peace and Benignity, and moſt eſpecially among the Diſciples of Chriſtianity, are ſuch as are plainly found in the Word of God, and atteſted by ſound reaſon.

1. *The firſt Foundation of univerſal Peace, and Love, and Beneficence in Religion given us by Chriſtianity, is, The Univerſal Conſent, Unity, and even Uniformity in Natural Religion throughout the ſouls of men, if they would ſhew themſelves men, and act as men, every where preſum'd upon, and appeal'd to in the Goſpel.*

Under this Head I will endeavour theſe Three things.

1. To take a brief view of Natural Religion, obſerving the intimate union of Chriſtian Religion with it, as Scripture brings it to light at its full luſtre, and preſents it at its full Dimenſions.

2. To ſhew the great agreeableneſs of Chriſtian Religion with Natural, and the teſtimony Chriſtianity receives from it, in what it reveals above and beyond natural Religion, and the Reaſons we have for our acceptance of it thereupon.

3. To obſerve the grounds of Univerſal Peace and quietneſs in the world upon its conſent in Natural Religion offer'd to us by Scripture and Reaſon.

For that there are ſuch grounds herein, I ſhall ſhew Chriſtianity ſuppoſes, and that it ſtrongly intimates they are the meaſure and ſtandard of ſuch a Peace and quietneſs to mankind in general.

Before I enter upon theſe, I muſt premiſe,

1. That Natural Religion in many things doth not at firſt and immediately appear to us, but upon ſtrong and ſedate motions, thinking, reaſoning, meditating; as we recover natural ſcience by ſtudy and labour in many points of knowledg, which yet being found, are moſt plain and evident.

2. There may be ſtrong prejudice againſt ſome Principles of Natural Religion, and yet no more argument againſt the truth of them, than that in former times there was a general confident disbelief of the *Antipodes*, was a diſproof of them, in which caſes yet Truth will by degrees prevail to victory.

3. It is certain the true and lively characters of this Religion are ſo defac'd and blotted by the fall, that they cannot be perfectly recovered but by Revelation.

Many Truths clear enough in themſelves concerning God, his Worſhip, the intercourſe of the ſouls of men with him, and in relation to their eternal condition, yea and in plainer

ner things than theſe, *viz.* concerning true Righteouſneſs, Mercy, Humility, Soberneſs, Patience, are not ſeen but in their darker rudiments, till they are revealed by God; but when they are ſo revealed, they ſo notably fall in, and unite with the remains of Natural Religion preſerved in us, that they aſſure the ſame original writing of all, both what we find more immediately in our hearts by their own light, and what we receive from the Word of God. Yet ſo, that Natural Religion is no where found in that brightneſs as in the Word of God, though revelation being ſupernatural, is an orb above natural, yet ſo large that it comprehends this lower and leſs.

The notices of Natural Religion by mans apoſtacy, retir'd as plants into the earth in Winter; Divine Revelation, as the Sun returning at the Spring, encourages them, ſo that they ſprout up afreſh, and grow, being cheriſhed by its warmer beams; and ſo, that we know theſe newer notices are of the primitive implantation, by their being drawn out in a continuation from the elder roots.

Yea, thoſe things that in the ſtate of innocency had no place, *viz.* Faith in the pardoning-Mercy of God, and repentance, (for there being no ſin, there was no need of theſe) by way of ſuppoſition of mans ſin, and ſo great a goodneſs of God any way diſcovered to man, flow as freely from the ſame fountain of Natural Religion, as any other duties of it, as is after to be ſhown.

4. Notwithſtanding all theſe former premiſals that ſeem to abate from it, I affirm Natural Religion is a Baſis for the common peace and quietneſs of Mankind, upon which they might eaſily ſo concenter as to preſerve the world from blood and cruelty on religious accounts, if they would (as I have ſaid) *ſhew themſelves men.*

I come therefore to take briefly the intended view of Natural Religion, and to obſerve the intimate union of Chriſtian Religion with it.

I. And first the acknowledgment of a supreme Being, the *Lord* and *Giver* of *all*, with all the *Reverence*, *Love*, *Obedience*, *Service* due to him as the great *Author*, *Benefactor*, *Lord and Judg* of the whole world, is the first most fundamental Principle of Natural Religion; and so plain and evident, that whoever denies it, may without any brand of cruelty be dealt with as a *Traytor* to the *Universe*.

1. For first he hath unhindg'd the order, subordination, and dependance of things, and laid the foundation of a perfect anarchy and confusion He hath cut asunder the sinews of Government, and laid all open to spoil and waste.

2. He hath undermined all gratitude, and dissolved the Laws of it, seeing receipt of being and preservation is the foundation of all gratitude; and he that denies this, unties the obligation of Parental Love and affection in children, of duty and subjection in inferiors, and so offers to deprive them of superiors care and protection.

And there is no subterfuge allowable in this case; for every man knowing he is neither the Author of his own being, nor the things that support it; must therefore know he is indebted for his being and preservation somewhere; and where can he so return it with reason, as to that *Almighty Jehovah*, whom reason it self alwaies presents, and universal nature and consent of mankind acknowledges.

3. Hereby all the most substantial reasons of doing well and avoiding evils, are turn'd into vanity; for inward conscience of, conformity to, awe of a supreme righteousness, guilt upon transgressions, fear of a supreme Judgment, are cut off at one blow; and the best that can be said for Vertue, is but conveniency; and when that alters, a man may do any thing; every one therefore may justly demand security of him that denies a God, as of a suspicious person, of whom he is alwaies as in danger.

4. Such

4. Such a one can have no conſcience to ſuffer for, he hath no eternal condition to take care for, no higher Majeſty to pleaſe, than on earth; and ſo may well be forced by any ſeverities to pay obedience in Religion to the Powers over him, which only he acknowledges.

5. Nor can he complain of injuſtice, who hath removed all meaſures of it out of the world, and conſigned all over to fate or chance.

6. He that will make himſelf *Heterodox* to all mankind, and differs from the univerſality of humane nature, may well be turned out of that Community as a Monſter.

II. That God can be but one, to him that acknowledges a God, is *Mathematick demonſtration*; ſeeing *Infinite* can be *but one*; and to whom the whole love, ſervice, and obedience of all creatures is due, He can be but *one*; for if there were more, they muſt be Gods without love and ſervice: he therefore that brings in more Gods than one, is a Traytor to the one true God, ſeeing more eaſily may the Firmament ſupport two Suns, one Kingdom two ſupreme Princes; than the nature of things more than one God; *Polytheiſm*, or the owning more Gods than the one true God, is an iniquity juſtly to be puniſhed by the Judg, being the firſt and prime Idolatry.

3. There being an acknowledgment of a divine Being, there muſt be immediately neceſſary a worſhip and ſervice of him; ſince there cannot be ſuch a Beeing, ſo relating himſelf to mankind, but there is an immediate obligation ariſing hereunto: and to own God yet without ſuch a relation to mankind (as I united with the mention of God) in the firſt particular, is but another ſort of *Atheiſm*, full of all the miſchiefs of that, which ſeems more perfect *Atheiſm*; and ſo is not another, but to all the intents and purpoſes of it the ſame, and therefore deſerves the ſame condemnation.

And if there be a worſhip, it muſt be publick and not pri-

vate

vate only, ſeeing the Glory of God is the univerſal intereſt and concernment of mankind, and therefore his honour in the worſhip of him is moſt juſtly under the inſpection of Magiſtrates with whom common intereſts are intruſted.

Beſides, there lies an obligation upon Communities as Communities, as well as upon ſingle perſons in their private capacity to worſhip God; and indeed the greater the Community, the more ſolemn the ſervice, the greater glory riſes up to the Divine Majeſty; and the zeal of mens Devotion mutually more excited and inkindled: This therefore is moſt deſervedly under the publick eye of Authority.

But this being agreed, it ſtill remains what this ſervice, this worſhip is? And this is evident, there can be no worſhip of God acceptable to him, but what is agreeable to his Divine and Excellent Nature, ſo far as created Nature can comprehend it, can reach up to it.

For as the ſervices of Princes are adjuſted to their wiſdom, Awe and Grandeur; Antiques, Phantaſtique Geſtures, and Mimick motions, become not the dignity of a grave and ſage Court, nor ſordid things its ſplendor.

God therefore being Infinite Spirit, Underſtanding, Reaſon and Goodneſs, his ſervice muſt comport therewith to rationality, ſpirituality, and Conformity with his Goodneſs.

The Firſt moſt excellent and abſolutely neceſſary ſervice and worſhip of God, is the preſenting him a holy, pure, and intelligent Spirit, in a moſt lowly adoration of, and aſtoniſhment at his incomprehenſible Perfections; in a reverence, fear, and moſt intent love of him, in a ready obedientialneſs to all his commands and counſels, in a ſtedfaſt truſt and reliance upon his Divine aſſiſtances, infinite Goodneſs, Bounty, and expectation of his gracious Recompences, in humbleſt aſpirings to his likeneſs, and the fruition of him for ever: and all this with a continual eye at his Glory, and

not

not to any lower end, but in ſubordination to this higheſt; for ſeeing there is ſuch an infinitely glorious Being as God, this is an undoubted Law of Rational Religion, In every thing to aim at his Glory; and this is one eſſential difference betwixt the Graces of Holy men in Scripture, and the Morality of the virtuous Heathen, that God was always in the eye of the one, but the natural Beauty of virtue at the higheſt; and their own Honour moſtly, if not altogether in the view of the other; which was undoubtedly a high offence, and under the Condemnation of Natures Law, if duly applied to it, and examined by it.

Next to this fundamental and moſt real worſhip of God, is that external worſhip, which from the ſame Reaſons of Gods being infinite Underſtanding, Spirit and Truth, muſt be alſo moſt Intellectual, and ſpiritual in the Soul, guiding thoſe Organs of the Body moſt prepared to rational uſe, but with the moſt plain, ſimple and unaffected attendance and compliance of geſtures, according to the cuſtom of Countries, as ſtanding, kneeling, bowing, uncovering the head, and ſuch-like decencies of habit and behaviour; and theſe only as following and waiting upon Rational Service, which is all that Natural Religion requires of outward Ceremony.

This worſhip of God then in the Diſcourſes of Wiſdom, and Holy Reaſon concerning him, ariſing from deep Meditation, and Contemplation of him, Diſcourſes of Obedience to him, and Conformity with his Excellent Attributes and Perfections, of eternal injoyment of him; Declaration of his Works of Creation and Providence; of his final judgments; of that chief of his ſublunary Works, Humane Nature; Obſervation of the Degeneracy of man by ſin, the Diſcourſes of the poſſible Recovery and Reſtoration of man by Repentance, of the infinite patience of God, and his readineſs to pardon, as a ſtrong Incentive to Repentance.

For that that Doctrine is made known to men by the light

light of nature, consequentially, and by way of deduction, though not originally ingrafted, I make no doubt, and that these two ways:

1. By that obligation to forgive, planted in humane nature, and the inclinableness of generous minds to it, as an Excellency and Glory of Humane Nature; and therefore it is most attributable to God, seeing all perfection derives from God, and is most attributable to him: *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses:* He hath declared to man it does so, by inserting it as a Nobleness in his heart. They therefore that do not esteem it a virtue, and of most desirable practise in themselves, may upon that very reason dispair of it from God, seeing they count it wiser and better not to forgive; and whatever is best and wisest, is most attributable to God.

Dan. 9. 9.

2. By the patience of God towards sinners, which in its most natural Inferences leads *to repentance*, and *is salvation*; Infinite goodness not being willing that *any should perish, but all come to repentance*; and therefore that penitential frame discoverable in humane nature, upon ingenuous sense of sin, answers *this patience of God*; as the Eye and light, as the Ear and sound do one another, and both together are a connate Gospel in mans soul.

Rom. 2. 4, 5. 2 Pet. 3. 9.

If any should think this a derogation from the Mediator, he will be satisfied, I intend no such, when I tell him, I esteem; all those notions of Natural Religion and Morality, as continued to be planted in man, are from *Jesus Christ, the Creator-Redeemer, by whom every thing was made that is made, who is that true light, that is the light of men; the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* Natural Religion therefore may well be inlaid with Evangelical Lines, since it is all from Christ. The Apostles therefore, both St. *Paul* and *Peter*, discourse it as the great sin of men against natural Knowledg and Conscience, *not to know that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance,*

John 1. 4, 9.

pentance, to deſpiſe the riches of his long-ſuffering, and forbearance, to account it ſlackneſs, and not ſalvation, which could not be without the grace of God in a pardon made known by natural light; nay indeed all impreſſions of Natural Religion continuing and moving to good actions after ſin, are built upon Gods pardoning Mercy, becauſe God allows, receives no worſhip from Devils, who *find no place for repentance*; *David* therefore celebrates God thus, *There is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared*; that is, honoured, reverenced, worſhiped and ſerved, which could not be ſince mans ſin, if thou didſt not forgive. Pſal. 103. 4.

Thus evident is the Doctrine of Pardon and Repentance, that if there be any ſuch thing as Natural Religion ſince the fall, that muſt be a noble branch of it. *The King of Nineveh* had a *confidence* in this Mercy, that ſo peremptory decree of deſtruction notwithſtanding, for the allowance of them a quarentine or forty days patience carried a ſolemn promiſe of Pardon upon Repentance in the very nature of it, elſe why was not the deſtruction immediate? ſo he underſtood, and ſo it proved, and therefore it is a worthy part of religious publick diſcourſe in the worſhip of God. Jonah 3. *ult.*

2. The ſecond duty of Natural Religion is prayer to God, which our dependance upon God, our expectation from him, both for the holy and happy ſtate of our minds in vertue and godlineſs challenges from us, the recommendation of our ſtate beyond death into the hand of God *as a faithful Creator* requires it of us, the peaceable and proſperous order and government of the world, and of our nearer concerns in it, National, Domeſtick, Perſonal, provoke us to it; Prayer for pardon and reconciliation to God, Vows of obedience to him, of returns to him by repentance, how neceſſary are they? for upon ſuppoſition of ſin and hopes of pardon, the ſame conſiderations enter into prayer that do into diſcourſes of God.

John 15. 4. Now this is a duty ſo natural, that not to pray is *to reſtrain prayer*, to ſhut up and impriſon a moſt natural motion and vent of the ſoul that is ready forcibly to burſt out as water confin'd within bounds too cloſe for it. *David* Pſal. 65. 2. makes addreſſes to God as by one of his Attributes, *Oh thou that heareſt prayers*, and therefore haſt an *univerſal congregation* of ſuppliants about thee, *to thee ſhall all fleſh come.*

3. Praiſes of God in the divine excellencies of his Nature and Beeing, in the glories of Creation and Providence, in his Mercies and continual Beneficencies to our ſelves and all his creatures, in his righteouſneſs, judgments and ſeverities upon the wickedneſs that is in the world, are a tribute to God ſo natural, that God *as our Maker* gives *all men ſongs in the night*, that is continual matter of praiſe even in the ordinary and extraordinary ſeaſons: the whole Creation is one Mouth opened in his glory. This is ſo due and even neceſſary to be paid, that ſome Naturaliſts of no great reputation for Devotion, have upon the ſurvey of the admirable works of God found his praiſes even bubbling up from them in Hymns of Praiſe.

4. The holy and reverend mentions of God upon all juſt and valuable Reaſons, as in ſwearing by his Name, in Covenants and Pacts, in deciſion of controverſies by teſtimony, in aſſeverations of truth, in promiſes, are among the Decrees of this Natural Religion.

Laſtly, The univerſal Sanctification of the Divine Majeſty in all our thoughts, words and actions, that in nothing we may reverſe that acknowledgment we make in ſolemn duties; who that calls God the beſt and greateſt Names of Love and Awe in the higheſt degrees, (as Heathens did by the force of Natural Religion) can deny or keep back any part of theſe from God? or if any denies them, or does contrary to them by impious ſwearing, blaſpheming the Name of God, or undervalues the awful and tremendous attributes, or what evidently and undoubtedly pertains to the Di-

Divine Honour and Glory; who can ſay ſeverity upon him is cruelty, but a due ſacrifice to juſtice, as puniſhments for blood, rapine, unnatural luſts are?

All theſe then are ſo plain and evident Duties, that they need nothing of further diſcourſe, but only a ſober reflection upon their own evidence in order to their prevalency in the underſtanding of men.

And for the manner of performance, beſides the very gravity required in ſuch awful actions, the prudence of rational nature in its ſolemn deportments, the greateſt condecency required to divine things that can ariſe from nature and not from artifice, I know nothing to be added except a caution to reſt here, and not to ſuffer the tranſports and inchantments of a fleſhly imagination that is endleſly ſpinning out it ſelf in forms and modes of divine worſhip, till that worſhip become not a piece of pageantry only, for that were harmleſs in compariſon; but the abomination of idolatry and ſuperſtition, moſt loathſome to that infinitely pure and ſpiritual Nature.

I come in the next place to conſider how far time, place, diſtinction of perſons in religious worſhip, are within the cogniſance of the law and light of Nature. For I omit out of choice any diſcourſe of ſacrifices, which ſome have contended came in by natural inſtinct, as too copious for the preſent intendment, concluding they were ordained by God chiefly to typifie the true, ever breathing ſacrifice of Chriſt, which ſervice having performed, they expired in it, not only repealed by the Evangelick Law, but (no doubt) through the ſuperintendency of Providence grown into diſuſe throughout the world, which together with thoſe ſtrong ſolid Reaſons againſt their valuableneſs in themſelves given by God, *Pſal.* 50. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Mic.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Heb.* 9. 10, &c. ſufficiently argue they were not of natural notion, nor of the everlaſting Righteouſneſs of that Law.

Let us therefore, waving them, go on to debate the di-

ſtates of Primitive rules concerning time; and I find but two things I can ſuppoſe injunctions of ſo ancient a date pertaining to it.

1. That the time be ſufficient, capacious enough for the receipt of Religious duty and action, ſufficient for the making ample inquiries and ſearches into Divine things: for the ſouls commoration, and reſt upon them for the diſcharge of Religious buſineſs and duty; and ſo ſuitable and agreeable to the teſtification of our honour to the ſupreme Majeſty, by offering ſuch a proportion of our time together, ſuch frequency of returns, with the *favour of ſeaſon*, and *redeeming ſeaſon*, when it ſeems to fly from us; that in all we may have a liberal ſpace for ſo grand a buſineſs in our more ſtated and occaſional performances.

2. That in what concerns publick worſhip, the time be commenſurate, as in the former particular, to all the ends and purpoſes of publick worſhip, the occaſions and advantages of it, and particularly that it be known, agreed, and indicted for that ſervice.

But for the *ſeventh part of time*, though undoubtedly pitcht upon with infinite wiſdom, juſtice and equity in the fourth command, reſpecting Divine honour and buſineſs on one ſide, and humane occaſion and diverſion on the other; yet it muſt certainly be ſaid, the original *hallowedneſs* of it is founded in Divine command, and muſt be conveyed by undoubted tradition of that command, having no more natural in it, than the general compromiſe of the world in the diſtribution of Time into Sevens, or weeks, ſeldomer than which no reaſonable ſenſe of Religion could allow for the recurrency of ſolemn publick worſhip, mix'd with continued private devotions, as in *extraordinary* to *every days* ſervice. Elſe I cannot perceive it could be defin'd by the laws of natural underſtanding. For *place*, theſe two things are alſo neceſſary.

1. That *places* be as agreeable as may be to the end; ſecret and retired places for retired and ſecret worſhip; places of

of domeſtick coveniency for Families; and publick, known, and agreed, for publick worſhip.

2. That places for Divine Worſhip have the decency, gravity and ſolemnity that is ſuitable to ſuch a degree and quality of buſineſs as is there to be negotiated; not as any part of Divine Worſhip, or ſo much as having any influential conduciveneſs upon the mind in ſuch action, but ſolely as the reſult of humane prudence adjuſting every thing to its proper uſe and ſervice, and with the *decorum* moſt natural to it.

For time and place having no influence upon Religious actions, more than upon all common humane actions by any peculiar vertue of their own, they cannot without a peculiar Sanctification from God, with which he by his revealed will acquaints thoſe upon whom he is pleaſed to enjoin the obſervation, riſe any higher than themſelves. Nor can humane appointment extend them beyond expediency and decency; the ordinary rules by which all things civil and humane are ſquar'd.

Devotion can mount nothing higher than its own true elevation as to the nature of the thing. Devotion (I ſay) and zeal aſcend up to God, yet they leave the things they uſe behind to reſt in their own ſtation. It being a Divine power that makes any thing Divine or Sacred, or efficacious to any ſuch productions. Without this, every thing reſts upon its own baſis of natural aptitude, obſerved and imployed by reaſon to thoſe ends and purpoſes whereunto that aptitude ſerves.

Time and place rated beyond themſelves, become injurious to religious ſervices, receiving more of the minds attendance and reſpect than is due to them; which being wholly oblig'd to a total, ſole, and ſingle determination upon the Divine Majeſty it ſelf, muſt not look off from it, but under the peril of moving that jealouſie God expreſſes in the Scriptures; and if not thus, yet they beget in men

inju-

injurious thoughts of God, as if *he dwelt in Temples made with hands*, and the preſence of the *Lord of Heaven and Earth* confin'd there; whereas except by his own choice upon certain reaſons, as among the *Jews*, all places are alike, and He equally accepts thoſe that worſhip him *in ſpirit and truth*. He that inhabits Ubiquity, is no more offended, or diſdains mean and unadorn'd places for his ſervice, than ſtately Structures. To miſdeem ſo of God, hath a degree of that folly that would reſtrain his Omnipreſence leſt it ſhould be defil'd with the ſordidneſs of ſome receptions nauſeous to us; not knowing that Infinite Spirit feels not the paſſions of body: our Saviour made uſe of any place for Heavenly Diſcourſes and Prayers: to obſerve days or times, carries a ſuſpition, that he who inhabits eternity, and is Lord of time, is not all times the ſame; and therefore the Heathen that had corrupted natural Religion, watcht for ſome days as more lucky, and avoided others as unlucky in their attendances on their mock-deities. Yet doth God allow to men the wiſe and prudent choice of their own conveniences in his worſhip, both for time or place, not preſuming to ſanctifie any thing to him, that he hath not firſt ſanctified to himſelf; for who knows how to chuſe for him? or *who is able to give to him firſt?* This muſt needs be the determination of natural reaſon, if it uſe its own light, and diſcharge its own truſt.

Joh. 4.21,23, 24.

Having ſpoken thus briefly of *time* and *place*, I come to the third thing, *Diſtinction or ſeparation of perſons for Divine offices*; how far it is directed by natural Religion, under theſe three Heads.

1. In the firſt Ages of the world, *Patriarchal Elderſhip*, nearneſs to the Creation, and continual acquaintance with the Hiſtory of Gods Treaties and dealings with men, together with the Power, Gravity, Authority reſident in it, carried the moſt fit adminiſtration of Divine Things along with it, ſo that the *Pontifical*, *Prophetick*, and *Royal Authority*

thority accumulated upon them: this ſeems unqueſtionable in Reaſon, Scripture, Hiſtory, and univerſal tradition.

2. After the multiplication of Families into Nations, and greater Communities, and that *Patriarchate* and *Primogeniture* loſt it ſelf in the numerouſneſs of Mankind; Reaſon advis'd to the orderly ſeparating, and dedicating ſome perſons to the continual attendance upon Sacred Offices.

3. That they might be the more Authoritative herein, as perſons of greateſt ſanctity, wiſdom, attainments in knowledg, were moſt recommended to ſuch a choice; ſo Education, ſeparation to Reading, Meditation, Study, for attainment of knowledg, muſt be the means under the eye of Natural Religion, for enabling perſons for the diſcharge of ſuch Functions.

For there are but three ways whereby perſons can be ſuppoſed authorized to preſidency in Divine Things.

1. By *Parental* Authority, the ſame with *Patriarchal.*

2. By *Eminency of Parts and Gifts* join'd with dedication of themſelves, and orderly approbation to publick office.

3. By *ſpecial and immediate appointment of God*, either by a ſtanding Law, as in the *Levitical Prieſthood*; or by Inſpiration, as in the Prophets.

The firſt two are of Natural Sanction, the laſt of Supernatural Ordination.

And ſo far as appears by Sacred Records, no one of them excludes from Diſcourſes and Inſtructions of even a publick character, thoſe that have eminent gifts and inablements, though not by immediate inſpiration; as *Elihu* having an excellent ſpirit, equal'd himſelf with men of days, and years, as he himſelf ſpeaks, *Job* 32. 7, 8.

But *Jeroboams* making *Prieſts of the meaneſt of the people*, was a tranſgreſſion againſt the very Laws of Nature. 1 King. 12. 31.

And it ſeems to me an error of too much a like enormity againſt innate reaſon, to bring down Divine Offices to ſuch

ſuch prepar'd preſcription, as the moſt uneducated, undevoted, undedicated perſons to knowledg, ſtudy, meditation might perform, ſo that they have nothing to truſt to, but (as it is call'd) the *indelible* character of Ordination, which will hardly bear them out in the Court of natural Conſcience, and therefore cannot eaſily attone them to the rules of Revealed Religion, which never contradicts, or ſo much as diſpenſes with natural.

On the other ſide, to clog the higher dignified perſons in this Miniſtry with ſo much of rule and buſineſs, as hinders the performance of theſe Divine Offices with the utmoſt effects of that ſtudy and meditation before ſpoken of, runs into the ſame ill conſequence, and exchanges a Religious ſervice into a ſecular Grandeur. Elſe no one hath reaſon to envy, that they who are Princes in Righteouſneſs, Truth, and Peace, and *Prieſts indeed of the moſt High God*, mediating continually betwixt God and men, in Doctrine, Prayer, Bleſſing and Praiſes, ſhould be placed among the *Princes of the people.*

Gen. 14. 18.

And ſo I have run through thoſe things that more immediately concern *the firſt and greateſt commandment*, but *like unto theſe* are Righteouſneſs, Juſtice, Mercy, Truth, Sobriety, Temperance, Charity, Humility, Modeſty, Patience, general love, peaceableneſs, containing our ſelves within our own bounds, order, ſubmiſſion to Government, with perfect ſubjection in all things that do not contradict obedience to God, together with all thoſe things that ſpeak virtue, goodneſs, lovelineſs, good report, honour, eſteem in human converſation, which ſo far as they can come under the obſervation of man, and can be regulated by laws, ſo far as they can come into palpable inſtances, are worthy of rewards, and encouragements, and the contrary of puniſhments. This is natural Religion, and it ſtands upon this unmovable foundation; Nothing is more truly Religion, or reverence of the Divine Majeſty, than thoſe things which do moſt

Mat. 22. 37, 38.

Phil. 4. 8.

moſt perfect humane nature into a conformity with God.

And therefore the firſt and chiefeſt in the order or ſcale of Religious excellencies, are the things that are moſt really good: the more ſubſtantial, rational, ſolidly good any thing is, the more it *pleaſes God*, and *muſt be approved of men* if they *ſhew themſelves men*. Rom. 14. 18.

Thus all the maſſy acts of Love to God and men, Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, Soberneſs, excel all the Honour pretended to be done to God by prayer, praiſes, diſcourſes of him, or whatever of that ſort ſeems moſt worthy to be preferred, which without the other become a flattery of God only.

Next diſcourſes of his word and will in order to learn obedience, are of higher account than prayer, for *He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer ſhall be an abomination*; yet Prayer and Praiſes are much more acceptable than ſacrifices. Prov. 28. 9.

There may be now a *ſolemn appeal* made to all the world, whether Chriſtian Religion is defective in one ſingle point of this true Natural Religion at the higheſt and fulleſt dimenſions of it poſſible to be conceived: here is the *height* and *depth*, the *breadth* and *length* of Natural Knowledg, concerning God, concerning good and evil, concerning rewards and puniſhments, according to the moſt ſober ſedate judgment of Mankind, the univerſal conſent of the world, the moſt ready *accuſations* and *defences* all men make in points of *good* and *evil*, in their treaties and debates one with another, according to the diſcourſes of the moſt Wiſe, Learned, and Virtuous of the Philoſophers, the beſt of Lawgivers. If then there be the moſt Wiſe, the moſt Good, the moſt Virtuous that ever was in nature found in Chriſtian Religion, abating nothing but *poſitive Laws*, *topical Religion*, *Rites and Cuſtoms*; what a foundation of peace, quietneſs and happy ſtate might a conſent but in this Natural Religion (as it is fairly extant in the Chriſtian Reli-

gion) be! and what a conviction of the Chriſtian verity would ſuch an acceptance of Natural Undeniable Religion from it be! when juſt as in the *day* of *Pentecoſt*, thoſe ſeveral ſorts of people heard the wonderful Works of God, each in their own language; ſo in Chriſtianity, every one finds what ever they can think (excepting their own particular Rites) moſt generally, truly, and valuably good, and that upon deepeſt conſiderations, ſtricteſt examination, and even uncontroverſable certainty.

Acts 2. 8.

And how benign and compaſſionate might mankind be to it ſelf, if ſummoning together theſe truly excellent notions, and framing its *Religious Laws* according to them, they exacted a ſevere conformity in all, that is thus *vertuous* and *good*, and allowed a benign freedom of offering and receiving the beſt accounts that can be given of further revelations from God, forbearing injury, violence, and blood; and then alſo it would ſoon appear what an *indiſputable title*, that only excellent *Religion* of our *Saviour* hath to be the *truly Catholick Religion* of the whole world; and ſo far to ſet it at peace.

Now though there is little reaſon to expect this will come to paſs, till *a ſpirit be poured out from on high*, and theſe *rivers of truth break out in the wilderneſs*, till the great *Prophecies* of *Scripture* looking to a better ſtate of the world come to be fulfilled: Yet ſtill according to the rule of right Reaſon, it ſhould be ſo; nor doth it diminiſh the reaſonableneſs, or ſilence the offers of the Reaſons, that they are not likely to have their effect, there being many other (in the event) incurable evils upon men, in deſpight of right Reaſon, the cure of which yet any one may freely offer and diſcouſe.

2. Having thus far inſiſted upon the firſt Particular under this Head of Natural Religion, I come to ſhew the *agreeableneſs* of *Chriſtian Religion with Natural*; in what it reveals above, and beyond *Natural Religion*, and the great

great *Reaſons of our Acceptance* of *Chriſtian Religion* thereupon, which was the ſecond Head propos'd.

And that I may make this the clearer, let it be diſtributed into theſe three *Branches.*

1. That it is hereby neceſſarily ſuppos'd, *Natural Religion is given to be a Teſt and Touch-ſtone of Truth in Religion.*

2. *That Chriſtian Religion hath ſuch an evident agreement with Natural Religion, as to be approved and recommended by it.*

3. *That it being ſo excellent, and ſo recommended, it lays the true grounds of peace throughout the world in Religion.*

1. As to the firſt I thus argue: If a man have no *notes of diſtinction* within, if there be not a Religious, Rational Underſtanding planted by God as a nature in man; if there be not Principles ingrafted into that Underſtanding, how ſhall a man know the goodneſs of anything propos'd to him, the conformity of it with what it is pretended to be?

When our Saviour challenged the Phariſees requiring a ſign from Heaven for the truth of his Doctrine thus: *Why even of* (or from within) *your ſelves judg ye not what is right?* He imply'd, The very eſſence of a man as an Intellectual Rational Spirit, muſt be alſo full of *Religious* and *Moral Principles*, and ſo muſt have innate judgment of Religious Truth, as many other Scriptures aſſure us. Without this a man can have nothing but an *Implicite faith* for his Religion, a ſtrong belief, it's true. Now ſeeing *Turks*, *Jews*, *Papiſts*, every one that is throughly poſſeſs'd with his Religion hath the ſame; this kind of Faith is no other than theſe *ſeveral Religioniſts* laying a wager one with another, which is the true Religion; and it greatly derogates from the *Chriſtian Religion*, to ſuppoſe there is no more but this *confident adventure* for it, rather than for any other, and no grand aſſurance within in *Natural Religion.* Even mat- Luk. 12. 57.

ters of *Divine Revelation*, however immediately from God, muſt be hence known and diſcovered, elſe every thing that calls it ſelf Revelation muſt be taken for Divine.

Although the *Prophets* might be at ſome times under a ſtrong ſupernatural hand, that *tranſported their minds*, as it did alſo in *extraordinary caſes their bodies*; yet they were generally under the *ſtill-voice*, ſpeaking to their faculties, enlightning their reaſon, ſanctifying their affections, by which they had even at the time of their *greateſt raptures* a ſenſe of the excellency of Divine Truth, an habitual acquaintance with the ways of Divine approach and preſence; a *ſearch into the things* they had ſpoken, even after they had ſpoken them. So the Apoſtle *Peter* tells us, *They ſearched what or what manner of time the Spirit that was in them, did ſignifie.* They had a *holy guſt* of *Divine things*, a judgment diſcerning between any ſort of *private ſpirit*, and the univerſal Spirit of Grace and Truth: elſe how did they differ from *Balaam?*

1 Pet. 1. 11.

2 Pet. 1. ult.

Abraham no doubt had a free debate with himſelf of the certainty that the *voice* was Divine that *commanded him to ſacrifice his Son*; and argued within himſelf the reaſonableneſs of returning *his Son*, and eſpecially his Son *Iſaac*, to the *Author of all life and being*, and of *Iſaac*'s moſt particularly, and ſo he reſign'd him. But Infinite Truth and Goodneſs always jealous over the ſacredneſs of Nature's Laws, would not permit the execution.

Gen. 22.

The great *power of Miracles* is not their *aſtoniſhment of ſenſe*, but ſummoning mens minds with great authority to Rational and Religious Conſiderations, laid up in ſtore within them.

The ſum then of this Point is this: Natural Religion always with us, as intimate as our faculties, as certain and true as *they* are, in their *frame* and *creation*, muſt be our *Ordeal*, if I may ſo call it, our *Fiery*, our ſureſt way of trial, of all Propoſals made to us in Religion; that is after due

due awakening our minds, and examination of things by them; and the *bleſſed aſſiſtances, or higheſt infuſions of the Divine Spirit* are breath'd into our natural ſentiments in things pertaining to God, inlightned, purified, and guided into all truth.

2. The ſecond Branch follows, *viz.* Chriſtian Religion hath ſuch an evident agreement with Natural Religion, as to be approved, and recommended by it, even in what it reveals above, and beyond Natural Religion. Now if it be firſt evident, there is not *one good thing* in that whole Religion, (*as every thing in it is holy, juſt, and good*) but Chriſtianity hath united it ſelf with it ſelf, it hath ſo carefully gathered *up all the fragments of it*, that *no one thing* is or can be *loſt*. And if it be made good in the ſecond place, that whatever Chriſtian Religion reveals beyond natural Religion, endures the *touch* of *Natural Religion*, and is (beſides its own *proper credentials*) recommended by it, there cannot be any thing added to evince that Chriſtian Religion is a foundation of *Oecumenical peace in Religion*, ſeeing *Natural Religion* is the *Oecumenick Religion*, the *Religion* of all *mankind*. It muſt be ſo, for every man hath *it written in his heart*, and Chriſtian Religion is in much of it, *one and the ſame Religion*, is all of it moſt agreeable with *Natural Religion*, and recommended by it. It then neceſſarily follows, no man can be wiſely, *Rationally Religious*, but he muſt be ſo far *Chriſtianly Religious*; and what Chriſtian Religion offers beyond the wiſdom and rationality of a man, beyond *the Law of the firſt creation*, is yet as agreeable with it, *as light with light, greater light* with *leſſer light*; how then can he that ſhews himſelf man, be cruel, outragious againſt, or out of peace with it? He that falls out with it, falls out with *Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, Soberneſs, Humility, Truth, peace with God, attonement to him, with laying hold upon Eternal Life, and flying from the wrath to come, with Patience, Meekneſs, Mercy, Compaſſion from God to men, from men to one another.*

He

He that perſecutes Chriſtianity, muſt perſecute *righteouſneſs, peace* and *joy in the Holy Ghoſt, in which whoſoever ſerveth Chriſt* (as every one muſt do that ſerves him) *is accepted of God* and *approved of men*; and therefore to deſpite Chriſtianity, is not only *Bellvine* but *Deviliſh*. So that the third Branch plainly reſults from the two former, *viz.* if Natural Religion be the ſtandard and touchſtone given us to try all things in Religion by, and that Chriſtian Religion comes off from the tryal *more precious than Gold*: It follows then of what value it ought to be to all the world.

Rom. 14 17, 18

To demonſtrate then the ſecond Branch, that Chriſtian Religion ſo agrees with Natural, as to be recommended by it, in what it reveals beyond it.

1. The firſt thing I ſhall inſiſt upon, is this,

That even as Natural Religion conduces very much to the worlds Peace, that it is Natural, Subſtantial, and not Ceremonial; ſo doth it alſo recommend Chriſtian Religion, that it is ſo far from conſiſting in Ceremony that it hath no more in number than there were found in innocency.

There was the *tree of the knowledg of good and evil, the not eating of which* was *a ſymbol of univerſal obedience.* There was *the tree of Life*, a Sacrament *ſealing the Reward of obedience.* There was the *ſeventh day Sabbath*, a day of ſolemn converſe with God and meditation of his Works, founded upon *his reſt from Creation*, and a pledg of *everlaſting Reſt with God.*

Gen 2. 9.

Gen. 2. 2, 3.

In Chriſtianity there is *Baptiſm*, the *ſeal of the Covenant of Grace* entred into on Gods part, and ours. The Sacrament of *the Lords Supper* the ſeal of the full *Communication* of all the bleſſings of the *Covenant.* The *Chriſtian Sabbath, a day* dedicated to the ſervice and enjoyment of the *Creator-Redeemer*, giving natural Reſt to bodies, *Religious Feſtivals* to ſouls in holy imployment and action, grounded on his *Reſurrection*, and *ſitting down on the right hand of the*

the Majeſty on high; called by expreſs title *the Lords Day*, (as the *Euchariſt the Lords Supper:*) and a pawn of the Eternal *Sabbatiſm* with our Lord in Glory.

Now theſe are ſo few, ſo eaſie, ſo familiar, ſo near natural, ſo intelligible, that it is plain the *Inſtitutor* and *Founder* of them had no pleaſure in *Ceremonies*; or that his ſervants ſhould waſte their time or ſpirits in obſerving them, or imploy their underſtandings in finding out a *Rationale* for them, although in condeſcenſion to men ſojourning in fleſh and blood, he gave ſuch *Symbols* of his Grace and Preſence.

And ſo in the fewneſs, the eaſineſs, the intelligibleneſs there is a teſtimony to them from *Natural Religion*, which elſe is unconcerned in all the Religious Rites and Ceremonies that are in the world, and leaves them to be judged by that proof they can make of themſelves, either as enjoyned by God, or as the reſults of *humane Prudence*, or *National Decency*. Further it can give no account of them, for *Natural* and *Ceremonial*, *Subſtantial* and *Ceremonial* are oppoſed one to another.

This then is the Glory of Natural and Chriſtian Religion, which indeed are not *two* but *one*, that they have leaſt of ſhade.

The darker any Religion is, the more are the Ceremonies like the *ſhadows of the evening* ſtretched out; the clearer the Religion; the nearer the perfection of Heaven, (where there is no ſhadow at all) the leſs are the Ceremonies, like the ſhades of a high noon in the Summer ſolſtice.

The depraved heart of man is ſo eaſily bewitch'd with Forms and Fopperies, calling them *ſignificant Ceremonies*, (like ſaying to *the dumb ſtone awake, ariſe and teach*, or *to their ſtaff declare to us*) that it is by no means to be truſted, leſt ſeeking a ſhady devotion of Ceremonies under the diſguiſe of a ſolemn one, as the *Pagans* choſe *Woods and Groves* for their ſacred

Hab. 2. 19.
Hoſea 4. 12.

ſacred performances.) it loſe it ſelf in the thicket not knowing where it is, and in the end, the *true Religion* alſo.

I cannot ſee what Religion or Devotion (except that which ignorance is the mother of, and which cannot be good, no more than the heart that uſes it) can ſuffer by being eaſie of acceſs, familiar, unencumbred; the moſt plain, free, intelligible inſtitution of the *Lords Supper* was at length corrupted into *the idolatrous Maſs*, by being made horrid, as the φευκτὰ μυστήια. Religion by being ſolid and ſubſtantial is beſt ſecur'd from the ſtroak of the *Atheiſt*, who accuſes it of trick and deſign; for when there are found Ceremonial covers, like *pious frauds* over it, and they eaſily yield to Attack as of no value, the *Atheiſt* preſently challenges all the reſt by proportion, and renders it ſuſpicious.

It is beſt ſecur'd againſt the *ſchiſmatick* and unquiet ſpirit, that is truly ſo, for he hath ſomething in unneceſſary Ceremony to faſten on, and move trouble by. It is kindeſt to the more modeſt ſcrupulous perſon, who is upon great Reaſons afraid of humane additions to divine worſhip.

Ceremony can add nothing to the truly wiſe and generouſly Religious perſon, who loves Religion for it ſelf, and needs not the childiſh and Phantaſtick Gaudery or Gayety of Ceremonies to inamor him of Religion; he loves it for its true worth, for its native Beauty, and ſubſtantial excellency.

It is therefore only fitted to the *Hypochondriack Devotioniſt*, who loves Religion in ſuch a kind of ſet ſolemn dreſs, or to the *empty Formaliſt* that muſt have it ſo adorned, or recommended; or to *vulgar*, *unlearned*, and *irrational* minds, who muſt be catch'd with ſhows and pompous appearances, and kept in amuſe, that they may be ſomewhat intent in Religious excerciſe; but with this diſadvantage, that they ſeldom pierce further than this ſurface, or take notice of the

the Religion it ſelf; and when at any time theſe things happen to be expoſed, they become the ſcorn and hate of ſuch perſons, ſo that they deal rudely with them.

But now ſubſtantial, maſſive Religion yields not to ſuch ſort of Attacks, but like Rock reſiſts, ſupported with its own ſubſtance, born upon its own truth.

And therefore were it not for the excellency of Chriſtian Religion, of Divine Revelation in the Scriptures, I ſhould rather chooſe (as he ſaid) to have my ſoul among the Wiſe, Rationally Religious *Philoſophers*, (if ſuch can be found) then with any Religion that this day appears in the world, not excepting the *Romiſh* that hath deturpated, and diſhonoured the only excellent Religion; and as it is *Romiſh* is the worſe, becauſe it is *Chriſtian*.

Next to thoſe ponderous *ſelf-great*, and infinitely Rational principles of our *Lord*, and *Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, I ſhould chooſe to reſt only in the undoubted principles, and maxims of Natural Religion, ſo excellent, that Chriſtianity hath *not loſt one of them:* but ſo gathered up the *Fragments*, that no *one thing* could be loſt, as I have already ſaid.

Beſides this Natural, this Chriſtian Religion, I know nothing; but *all ſubjection to principalities* and *powers*, according to the Laws of Nations in civil things, the gravity and decency of Religious actions, according to all Laws of humane Prudence, and the cuſtom of Countries. If any one ſhould object to the advantage of Ceremonies, the ſtate of Religion among the *Jews* involved and wrapped up in ſo much *Ceremonie* : It may be anſwered to him:

1. There was ſo great, and preſential an evidence of Divine Authority concerning them among the *Jews*, who were only bound to them under that immediate *Theocraty* exerciſed over them, that as it was abſolutely neceſſary, ſo it was ſufficient to bear them up. God as the Author, continually and frequently appeared to give value to them by

his own particular command; He was able to bleſs and impower the meaneſt Rite to the greateſt ends; and therefore might command what he pleaſed: He therefore added often to ſuch precepts, *I am the Lord*, whoſe Authority could not be diſputed, whoſe Benediction could not be denied or ſuſpected. Thus *the waters of Jordan were better than all the Syrian Rivers. The clay and ſpittle*, and *waſhing in Siloam* beyond the moſt excellent natural Application.

2 Kings 5. 12. Joh. 9. 11.

2. And yet as if *Omnipotency* it ſelf could not make them, or did not care to make them of any great value; they are often exceedingly deſpiſed and ſet at nought of God himſelf, when conſidered as ſeparated from Divine Bleſſing and Grace, and from moral Obedience, and ſubjection to God.

Iſa. 1. 10. & 66. 3.

3. They are argued to be *childiſh* and low things, yea *poor* and *beggarly*; that there was a neceſſity they ſhould vaniſh at a time of *Reformation*; that the ſervants of God were under them, as being *under Age*: that a more manly and excellent ſtate of Religion was to be brought in, and did actually come in with the great Doctrine of the *Son of God*, and the *ſuperintendency* of the *Holy Spirit*.

Gal. 4. 3, 9. Heb. 9.

So that it is admirable whence it ſhould proceed, that the *Chriſtian Church* ſhould dote ſo much, and be ſo *languiſhingly ſick* after *Ceremonies*.

And whereas it is pretended, Religious Action looks bare and naked, and unadorned, when not ſhaded, and graced, and covered with Rituals.

They are only weak and feminine minds that think ſo. The natural Decency, Humanity neceſſarily chuſes; the National Decency proper to particular Regions and Climates with the weightineſs of Religious Actions themſelves are ſufficient grace and ſolemnity to them: more either obſcures or diſfigures them into *Antickneſs*, *Phantaſtry*, *Art*, or *Superſtitiouſneſs*.

And therefore indeed much of this ſort hath proceeded from

from the wanton and lascivious imagination of men, not loving the chast and pure Worship of God, and with holy minds embracing Truth, and the Divine excellency of it.

From whence hath always proceeded much of Division and Feud; every one endeavouring to obtrude the Creature of his own fancy in Religion, which having nothing of reason to bear it self upon, displeases others as much as it pleases himself; and must therefore be imperiously enforc'd; and if power go along with the Imposition, obedience to it is extorted by mulcts, and imprisonment, and often with cruelty and blood. And so much the more, that the minds of men impal'd in the love and dotage on Ceremonies, grow narrow, slavish, void of the love of God, and the generosity of true Religion; and from thence easily fall into a self-will'd, rigid, austere, revengeful spirit; but the sincere Religion is noble, free, large, merciful, and most compassionate. So that besides the intrinsick worth, the purity and spirituality of a Religion free from Ceremonies, it is a great security to peace and quiet. True *Natural Religion* being tyded along by Reason into mens minds, enters with much more insinuation, and persuasiveness, having an interest before-hand; renders mens temper more sweet and benign. Or if not receiv'd, being truly and substantially good, deserves punishment proportionable to the offence, without any just imputation of unmercifulness; For the offence against *Natural Religion* must be *perfect Immorality*.

2. I come therefore to consummate all in the full agreement of *Christian Religion* in the revealed parts of it with *Natural*; and I confess it is hard to receive some parts of *Christianity* naked and unguarded, torn off from the rest: As a limb by it self cut off from the body, is another thing than as it is in the body; so is it to run away with this, That the Christians worship a *God crucified*, that died as a *malefactor*, that was a *Carpenter*, that liv'd poor in the

 world,

world, and despis'd; without observing the whole train and connexion of things, the several great instances of Divinely *Rational Account* for it, as it stands in the whole body of Christianity. But when we consider in it the most indisputable rules of all Goodness, (as I have before at large set down) the presence of Divine Power in *Miracles*, that we have an inward sense of, as Divine; both which stand as it were at *the gates of wisdom*, drawing and inviting in minds, to behold the inward frame and contrivance; and when the correspondency, symmetry, substance, solidity, beauty, purity of all within is seen, then is there sufficient satisfaction against, and resolution of former doubts.

To him that patiently considers the great reasons of things as they stand in Gods Justice, it will appear why *Humane nature so laps'd, so peccant* and *guilty* should be att on'd by a *sacrifice* offer'd up in that *Humane nature*, wherein obedience to the *Divine Holiness* should be exemplified in the profoundest submission to *increated will and pleasure*, and in the greatest experiment of it; *Self-evacuation*, and even *annihilation*, and beyond this, *unexpressible sufferings*, that there might be a compensation to that Justice of God as the great Governour and Legislator offended by sin, seeing suffering and punishment follow upon sin and guilt: and that this should be performed (tho in *Humane nature*) yet by a person *who thought it no robbery to be equal with* Phil. 2. 6. *God*, even *the Son of God:* and that hereby all sensual worldly glory (the great temptation to sin) should be slighted, turn'd out of its Grandeur, and high pretensions in the world; and Intellectual, Spiritual, Heavenly, Eternal Glory, advanced and prefer'd to its own excellency and esteem by the *Saviour of the world:* who hath therefore brought in all that lively Doctrine of patience under sufferings, mortification, self-denial, contempt of this life, so feebly manag'd by Morality in comparison of this, as at the same time to shew it not unknown to nature, and yet much

much eclips'd: He that ſeriouſly looks upon things thus, and beholds them with the ſevereſt eye of Reaſon, will find that which will indeed perfect and accompliſh his Reaſon, and engage it to *worſhip*, and *throw its Crown* at the *foot* of *Infinite Wiſdom* and *Grace*, but nothing to deſpiſe, nothing to diſdain, only to be aſtoniſhed with the Infinite love and condeſcention of Divine Goodneſs, which yet is like *Infinity*, ſo to ſhew it ſelf.

But that this Particular may be better underſtood, let the Excellency of *Chriſtian Religion* in its Revelations be diſcourſed upon theſe avowed, declared, and moſt undoubted Principles, in reſpect to *Natural Religion*, in theſe three Points.

1. That the raiſing up *Natural Religion* to its true primitive excellency, is one great part of Chriſtian Revelation, *viz.* to ſettle the true Notions of God and his Attributes, the true love, fear of, delight in, deſire after God, reſignation and obedience to him; the truly generous kinds of Righteouſneſs, love, mercy, compaſſion to men; the unſpotted temperance, ſobriety, purity in a mans ſelf, the right Principles, Motives, Rules, and Ends of all theſe; the full-ſpread Doctrine of Immortality, and Eternal Life, of pardon of Sin, and mercy to Repentants, of Repentance it ſelf, and Faith in Divine mercy; and laſtly of future rewards and puniſhments. Now in all theſe (as I premis'd) *Natural Religion* is not to be meaſured by what is found in the dark and ſullied ſtate of the generality of Mankind at ſuch vaſt diſtances from the *days of Innocency*, or ſo much as in the colder, liveleſs Climate of Philoſophick Morality; but by what diſcovers it ſelf, when theſe frozen benum'd Principles relent, and are thaughn by the warmer beams of *revealed truth*, by what men *do*, and muſt *acknowledg* when they *come to themſelves*; then the Miniſters of *Natural Righteouſneſs out of* (and according to) *Divine Revelation are made manifeſt in mens conſciences*, and they ſpeak and write 2 Cor. 5. 11.

no

no other things than they *do acknowledg*, and *ſhall acknowledg to the utmoſt, to the very end:* Even as the illiterate mind does not at firſt perceive the wiſdom of ſuch a writer as *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Plutarch*, of ſuch Hiſtorians as *Livy*, *Tacitus*; but when it comes to be cultivated, it knows by a Teſt within it ſelf, the gravity and dignity of their ſenſe and ſtile. Thus at the firſt, *unexerciſed ſouls* taſt not the gratefulneſs of the *Word of God to natural conſcience*, which is afterwards moſt agreeable, *the ſenſes being exerciſed to diſcern good and evil.*

2 Cor. 1. 13.

Heb. 5. 14.

2. *In what of Chriſtianity pure and perfect revelation alone muſt be acknowledg'd:* There is yet ſuch a cloſe affinity betwixt the holineſs, purity, wiſdom of the one thus reveal'd, and the other implanted, that they muſt be own'd all from the ſame fountain, and accepted alike by every ſerious conſiderer; that as it is obſerv'd of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, and the ſeveral Writers of each, through all the variety of Times, Manners and Cuſtoms of the world in the ſeveral ages of it, throughout the ſeveral periods of the Churches ſtate and progreſſion, and throughout the different extractions, educations, employments, temperatures of the *Sacred Writers*, there is yet *one Wiſdom, one Reverence of God, one Holineſs, one Majeſty of Diſcourſe running through the whole, arguing the ſupreme Author one and the ſame.*

Even ſo in *Natural and Revealed Chriſtian Religion*, the Divine Commandment is perfectly *one* and the *ſame*, nothing trivial, nothing *Romantick*, nothing *Speculative* only; all is for greateſt uſe of the glory of God, and the ſalvation of mens ſouls, ſo as not to be refuſed.

3. The *Revelations of Chriſtianity* are the higheſt *Amplifications of natural light*, even to the utmoſt *poſſibilities of conception*, but in nothing *contradictious.*

The *Doctrine* of the *only true God* is kept moſt *pure*, even *as ſilver tried in a furnace of earth purified ſeven times.* But this Divine Nature is explained to us in the *Father*, *Son*, *and*

and the Holy Spirit; and in the infinite Graces and Bountics proceeding from the *Deity* ſo explain'd to us; and this is ſo to the utmoſt, that as we certainly know in Heaven it ſelf, it is impoſſible to know any more *Gods* than the *one true God* we have known here in the world; ſo it is as impoſſible we ſhould know any more in *that Eſſence* than *the Father, the Son*, and *the Spirit*, in Eternity it ſelf.

It is of everlaſting inviolable Truth, *There is one God*, and it is reveal'd to us in Chriſtianity, *There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus.* 1 Tim. 2. 5. *There is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him*; 1 Cor. 8 6. *and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him. And this is life eternal to know thee the only true God,* Joh. 17. 3. *and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* Thus the Divine Unity is preſerv'd. And leſt the obligation to a *Mediator*, to a *Redeemer*, ſhould abate or interfere with the obligation to the *one God and Father*; the *Mediator* is always made known to us, as *the Son of the Father*, the *brightneſs of his* Heb. 1. 3. *Glory, tho expreſs image of his perſon, the heir of all things.* So that the Glory of the *one Mediator* infinitely and incomprehenſibly unites, and circulates in *one*, with the *Glory of God the Father.* So far is the *Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt* Phil. 2. 21. from any the leaſt *contradictorineſs* to *that fundamental natural principle of one God.*

And as evident it is, that it is to the utmoſt, and above all we can think: for in the higheſt Glory of Knowledg, it is (we know certainly) impoſſible to know any *higher Mediator*, any *other Mediator* than *our one Mediator*; for as a man can riſe no higher than *God*, there can be no higher Beeing than *God*; ſo there cannot be a greater *Redeemer* and *Mediator* than the *Son of God.*

There cannot be a greater acceptance of a ſinner than upon the account of the *moſt perfect obedience*, and the *deepeſt ſufferings of the only begotten of the Father, the beloved Son, in whom he is well pleaſed.* Joh. 1. 14. Mat. 3. ult.

There

There cannot be a nearer union to the whole nature of of man, than by this *divine Perſon* aſſuming, not any *humane Perſon*, which had been *limited*, *narrow* and confined, but *humanity* it ſelf into one perſon with himſelf.

There cannot be a greater *inſpiration* and *internal operation* than of which the *Spirit of God* is the *Author* and *Fountain*; nor a cloſer *uniting* of Believers *to Chriſt*, than
1 Cor. 6. 17. by *this Spirit* to be *ſo joined to the Lord as to be one Spirit.*

Thus to the great *Juſtification* of *Chriſtianity* before *Natural Religion*, all is from God, and abſorpt into him, yet in ſuch a *diſtinction* from him, that every *glorified Spirit* enjoys its *Happineſs*, *Glory*, *Purity*, *Perfection*, *Acceptance* with the *Divine Majeſty* diſtinctly and in it ſelf; and yet ſo *in God*, that the whole *Glory* is refunded into him, which is the *perfect Glory of the Divinity.*

From the whole then, though it is moſt true that theſe great points ſurmount Reaſon in the diſcovery and explication, yet when it beholds theſe things in that full portraicture divine Revelation preſents them, it cannot but adore, and admire, and confeſs *the manifold wiſdom* and
Epheſ. 3. 10. & 1. 6, 11. *knowledg of God, the riches of his grace, the praiſe of his glory, working all things after the counſel of his own will.*

As to the *Chriſtian Doctrine* of the *Reſurrection* and *eternal Judgment*, they are but what is very agreeable to the very Principles of *Natural Religion*, all men having an ingrafted ſenſe both of it, and a *future ſtate*; and as to the *Reſurrection* it ſelf, I think it moſt manageable upon grounds of Reaſon, That the Creator can as eaſily command the Principles of a diſſolved body into one, as at firſt create thoſe very Principles out of nothing; nor can I think thoſe niceties of diſpute brought into this Article of Faith, of any moment, it being enough there ſhall be a *future ſtate* of *Spirits* in *bodies*, as in *ſenſible appearances* of *Glory* or *Miſery*, and thoſe bodies as much mens own,

as

as the nature of *matter* or *body* in a perpetual transmutation can bear.

And that this Doctrine also *of a future state* is to the utmost, cannot be denied, since nothing can more compleat happiness or misery than the Scripture expressions reach to. But I insist no further upon this, being in the main substance of it, in my account of it, a *fundamental point* of *Natural Religion*; but that God will transact this *Judgment* by *Jesus Christ*, is indeed perfect *Revelation*, and falls in with the former account given of his *Mediatorship*, and enhanses still this principle, as to its greatest certainty, so to all its possible height, since God in humane nature, God in the *Mediator Judging the world*, turns about with greatest consolation to good men and terror to evil men, that can be comprehended by humane understanding.

And so I have endeavoured to make good the second Head of discourse under this first foundation of universal peace, *Consent in Natural Religion*, viz. that *Christian Religion* in what it reveals beyond *Natural Religion*, agrees yet with *Natural Religion*, and is recommended by it: and herein I have insisted upon those points of Christian Religion that are truly Christian, for those private disputes among Christians were much better silenced within the *Gates of Christianity* it self (in that way wherein they are managed,) and therefore much more ought not to be *declared in Gath*, nor *published* in the *streets of Ashkelon:* neither indeed need the points themselves upon which the disputes are. For if together with those undoubted Principles of *Natural Religion* in *Doctrine, Worship* and *Practice*, (as they are reveal'd by *Christian Religion*) wherefrom none can make defection but under the most righteous severity of the Magistrate, who in those cases *bears not the sword in vain:* I say, if together with these, the substantial truths and institutions of *Christian revealed Religion* (wherein we are all agreed) were presented as the general confession or

profeſſion of Chriſtians, before we come to lanch out into particular opinions or modes of worſhip, our excellent Religion would ſtand much more like a *City ſet on an hill*, whoſe Magnificence and Beauty could *not be hid* for the benefit both of ſtrangers and its own Citizens, ſince things ſo great, ſo excellent, ſo agreeable with all the inward ſenſe of mens minds, could not be rejected by thoſe that would be accounted *men of Mind, Soul and Reaſon*; and eſpecially there could upon theſe terms Chriſtianity offers, be no poſſible place for *hurting* or *deſtroying* Chriſtians by any party, except men are reſolved to lay aſide the *Man*, and put on *the Lion and Wolf*.

Mat. 5. 14.

Now by all that hath been ſpoken upon this point, it appears three ſorts of Opinions, whatever of *Chriſtianity* they aſſume to themſelves, are indeed the injury and horrible ſcandal of it, becauſe they contradict *Natural Religion*, which is an abomination to *Chriſtianity*.

1. That Opinion which adoring our *Mediator* as having *all power in Heaven* and *Earth*, allows him an *ubiquitary preſence*, and addreſſes prayers to him, allots him *all Divine Honours*, and yet denies him *Coeternal God* with the *Father*, for this brings in ſupreme worſhip, love, confidence in more than the *One God*, it cloaths *Finite* with *Infinite*, which is a contradiction to the Law of *Natural Religion*, every where illuſtrated and confirmed by the *Word of God*: Of this great evil, *Socinianiſm*, *Arrianiſm*, and the ſeveral names of *Hereſy* of that *Alliance* are guilty.

2. That which brings in *Image-worſhip*, prayers to *Saints* and *Angels*, which ſuppoſes *Inviſible Beeings*, though creatures, *Omniſcient* and *Omnipreſent* as God, that in all places men may lift up *hands* to them in *prayer*, without *doubting* of their being loſt in their direction to thoſe, that are not that they know able to take any notice of them; and further, which is not the leaſt of the *Idolatry*, it gives them the honour of being abſolutely knowable by natural light in the Divine Attribute

tribute of *hearing prayers*, that *all fleſh may come to them*, viz. in their Knowledg, in their Mercy, in their Power, all which muſt be abſolute as Gods, and as evident to reaſon as *in God*, ſeeing men have no juſtifiable revelation to any ſuch purpoſe: the *Arto latria* or adoration of the bread in the Sacrament is of the ſame family: now however theſe things are intricated by various pretexts, yet as the ſpectacle in the laſt eſpecially is horrid to ſenſe, ſo the things to *Reaſon* and *Natural Conſcience*, and can ne'r be reconciled; we have otherwiſe *learnt Chriſt*, who in the *days of his fleſh* neither requir'd nor receiv'd *worſhip* directed to his *body* upon any ſuch pretenſions, *Mark* 10. 17. *Luke* 11. 27. 28. *John* 6. 36. *John* 20. 17. but refus'd it, except when at ſometimes the mighty *Emanations of his Divinity* proſtrated men into the *Adorations* of him.

3. Whatever *Dogme* or *Sect* of men ſubvert the very nature of *Religion* as a *Proteus*-Thing that ſneaks into all ſhapes and profeſſions according to the earthly powers it appears before, fearing *men rather than God*: All things that overturn *morality* and *diſtinction* betwixt *good* and *evil*; the *denial of Spirits*, *a future State*, as undermining the very *Life* and *Beeing* of the *Almighty Spirit*; all *Phanatick* Principles turning Religion into *Raunteriſm*, or moving the pillars of humane ſocieties, as conſiſting in *ſubmiſſion to principalities and powers*, in ſubjection to Laws, civil cuſtoms and decencies: all ſuch things as theſe and the whole lineage of them, however they may preſume to *Chriſtianize* themſelves, are a juſt abhorrence to the *true Chriſtian Spirit*, as moſt contrary to the *Law of nature*.

Theſe opinions therefore now named are excluded, and ſhut out of that *univerſal Peace* and *Quietneſs*, I am to ſpeak of under this laſt Head of the ſurvey of *Natural Religion*, which I now come to, *viz.*

The third thing propoſed under this firſt head of *Natural Religion*, and upon which the whole weight of it reſts,

and turns, as to the intention of this Diſcourſe is this: That *Chriſtianity* ſuppoſes it a firm ground of enjoying the *Common Peace* and *Tranquility* in *Religion*, that a man receives, and owns all the *grand points of Natural Religion*, *Godlineſs*, *Righteouſneſs*, *Soberneſs*, and acknowledges it his duty, and makes it his profeſſion to live according to them, that he avows no Principles contrary hereunto, though he believes and profeſſes to be aſſur'd of ſome other *Divine Revelations*, in order to his *Eternal Happineſs*.

It ſuppoſes, a man that in all his diſcourſe and action, gives abundant ſecurity of his fidelity to *Natural Religion*. A man that is no *Idolater*, *Atheiſt*, *Blaſphemer of Religion*, *Impugner of Morality*, that obſerves the *Worſhip of God*, in *Prayers*, *Praiſes*, and *Religious Diſcourſes* ſhould be free to *commend* himſelf to God, in what he thinks moſt agreeable to his will, though in *diſtinction* from others; whom he no way diſturbs againſt rules of Reaſon, Modeſty, Peaceableneſs, and Humility, but only offers the *Apology* of his own *faith*, yet with *meekneſs* and *fear*, and the perſwaſives of belief, and practiſe agreeable thereunto.

1 Pet. 3. 15.

Such a one, I ſay, *Chriſtianity* ſuppoſes to have a *right* to *common protection of Magiſtrates*, and the *Laws of Humanity*, while he endeavours to approve himſelf to God, at whoſe *Tribunal* he muſt *appear*, to whom as his *own Maſter* he muſt *ſtand or fall*, no man having power *to judg anothers ſervant* in this caſe.

Rom. 14 4, 10, 12.

Now I ſhall endeavour (with ſubmiſſion to better inſtructions) to give great reaſons, that this is the ground *Chriſtian Religion* bottoms upon, and *preſumes* to it ſelf, That perfect conformity in a *Mans Principles* to *Natural Religion*, (ſo far as *Principles* or *Being*, as we ſpeak, of a *Religion* are in debate) ought to be a ſufficient guard according to the preſent ſtate of Humane Nature, and the Divine Ordination upon it, againſt the Enmity, Deſpite and Injury of private perſons; and againſt the *inſolence* the *punitive juſtice* of Ma-

Magiſtrates. However a man in other particulars diſtinguiſhes himſelf for *conſcience ſake towards God.*

For the proof of this, I ſhall firſt inſiſt upon thoſe places of the New Teſtament, that I ſuppoſe fixt upon this foundation, and then argue it by reaſon with reſpect to all encountring Objections.

The firſt is that of the Apoſtle to *Timothy, I exhort firſt of all, that prayers, ſupplications, and giving of thanks be made for Kings, and all that are in authority, that we may live peaceable and quiet lives in all godlineſs and honeſty.* 1 Tim. 2. 1, &c.

This Exhortation of the Apoſtle contains two things.

1. The Duty the Apoſtle enjoins, *viz.* the *making of prayers, ſupplications, interceſſions*, and not them only, but *giving of thanks*, and *for all men*, and not only but *eminently* for *Kings and all that are in authority.* Now in that the Apoſtle injoins *giving of thanks*, it argues, though he did not exclude, yet he did not intend the only matter of the prayers ſhould be the converſion of thoſe prayed for. For there being then no converſion of Princes, nor ſo general converſion of private perſons as ſhould be *expreſſed by all men*, there could be no matter for *Thanksgiving.* But that which was mainly in the *Apoſtles* eye, was, that *Chriſtians* ſhould concern themſelves in all the *happineſs* and *welfare of mankind*, both by *Supplications, Prayers, and Interceſſions*; that is, with all the earneſtneſs, and heartineſs ſignified in that accumulation of expreſſions, and alſo by *Thanksgivings* for the mercies they enjoyed; and in *eminent manner* for Kings and thoſe in *eminency*, who are the *Truſtees* and *Depoſitaries* of the *Peace* and *Proſperity* of the world; and by this means *Chriſtian Religion* ſhould be known to be moſt agreeable with the true *natural* and *excellent Religion* of *mankind*, and a fair *Rational Inducement* offered to embrace it.

2. The advantage the Apoſtle expreſſes as ariſing from the due performance of this duty; That men in general and

and Princes in ſpecial, being convinced of their rights by the evidence of thoſe two main parts of *Natural Religion*, *Piety towards God*, *Love of Humane nature*, and the *Univerſal good* might afford to Chriſtians the rights and dues of *Godlineſs*; and *Grave*, *Honourable*, *Sober Deportment among men*; that is, *Peaceable* and *Quiet lives*, not breaking out into injury, and violation of common Protection and Humanity, becauſe they were *Chriſtians*.

From hence then I obſerve, the main foundation of right to *Peace* and *Quietneſs*, is *Godlineſs* and *Honourableneſs* of *manners*, in oppoſition to all *Immorality*: And *Prayers* and *Thanksgivings* for all men and Princes are moſt naturally to be underſtood for the *Tranquillity*, and *flouriſhing ſtate* of *Communities*, in the ways of *Piety*, *Juſtice*, and *Soberneſs*; though I doubt not they added, that they might by Converſion be not only *almoſt*, but *altogether Chriſtians*; and not only *not far from the Kingdom of God*, but that they might come from the *Eaſt* and the *Weſt*, from *the North* and *the South*, and *ſit down in the Kingdom of God*, to which the *freedom of propheſie* under the Caution of *Godlineſs* and *Honeſty*, might exceedingly conduce, on which account the Apoſtle goes on; *This*, that is, *All this* entercourſe, of *Chriſtians prayers*, *Godlineſs and Honeſty*: and *All Mens*, *Magiſtrates* eſpecially procuring their *peaceable and quiet lives*, *is acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour*, *who would have all men to be ſaved*, and by this means *to come to the knowledg* of the *Truth*, ſeeing the *One God*, *the One Mediator*, *Author of the One natural*, *and the One true reveal'd Religion*, is equally concern'd in all.

A ſecond place is that of the Apoſtle *Peter*, in relation to mankind in general, complicated with all thoſe expreſſions of both the Apoſtles, *Peter* and *Paul*, concerning *Magiſtracy*, and the *Ordination* of it by God.

In relation to mankind in general, the Apoſtle makes this challenge, 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. *And who is he that will harm you*,

if

if you be followers of that which is good? Plainly implying, *to follow that which is good,* ought in all *Reason* and *Equity* to ſecure men from *Harm*, and that *Good* which the Apoſtle intends muſt be Good, defin'd by the Laws of *Natural Religion* to be *good*; for elſe *Chriſtianity*, as it ſtood diſtinct from that (for contrary to it, it is impoſſible to be) was not then underſtood to be *Good*. All judgment of that therefore being ſuſpended, whether *Good*, or not *Good*, as it ſtood diſtinct from *Natural Religion*; The undeniable preſence of all Natural Religion and Power of it over the Lives and Actions of Chriſtians, was to be their defence on the *right hand*, and the left, from injury. Concerning Magiſtracy, *that Duumvirate* of *Apoſtles* concur, that Rulers are not a *terror to good works, but to the evil.* Wilt then thou not be afraid of the power? (ſaith the Apoſtle *Paul*) *do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame; for he is the Miniſter of God to thee for good: But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the ſword in vain; for he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doth evil; wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience-ſake.* Thus far the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*. The Apoſtle of the Circumciſion ſpeaks thus: *Submit your ſelves to every Ordinance of man for the Lords ſake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours, as thoſe that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and the praiſe of them that do well.* Rom. 13. 3, 4, 5. 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14.

Let the way of arguing uſed by theſe *two Apoſtles* be well weighed, the circumſtances of the times wherein they writ; the ſenſe of *Magiſtrates* concerning *Chriſtianity*, the obligation upon *Chriſtians to obey God rather than Magiſtrates*: and yet both theſe *Apoſtles* write as if *the nature of good and evil* were out of diſpute between *Magiſtrates* and *Chriſtians*, as if all were clear and fair between them, and no controverſie whether Chriſtianity was *True* or *Falſe*,

a *Good*

a *Good* or a *Bad Religion*; when yet Christians were under the *fiery Tryal*, when they were continually under persecution for their *Religion*, which the Apostle calls *Righteousness*, because able to justifie it self to be so by the *Laws* of *Natural Religion*; when they were bound to deny so great a part of their *subjection* to the *higher powers* as not to cease *to be Christians* at their command: what then does this *largeness*, *frankness* and *freedom* of expression mean? On *the part of Christians* to *be subject*, and that not *for wrath* but *for conscience sake* and to *submit themselves*, when yet they were presently upon the account of their holy profession of Christianity to deny *subjection and submission* to *the great command* of *Magistracy in Religion.*

On the part of *Magistrates*; that they were only a *Terror to evil works*, and a *praise to them that do well*, *that he that does well should not be afraid*, when upon the true estimate of *Christianity* they were *persecuting for righteousness sake.*

How can all this be reconciled? but by reducing all to the just bounds and limits of *divine Ordination*, fixing the Magistrates Power and the Peoples Obedience in things pertaining to Religion thus, so far as *Natural Religion* extends, so far the Magistrates power extends; here he is *the Minister of God and bears not the sword in vain:* hither is the *peoples obedience* to come; in all things pertaining to that they must *needs be subject*, not only for *wrath* but *conscience sake.* These are the *ancient Landmarks* that ought not to be removed: I speak not at all of civil obedience now, but of obedience in things *pertaining to the conscience.*

* Pet. 4. 15, 16. *Let none of you suffer as a murderer, as a thief, as an evil-doer, as a busie-body in other mens matters*, So the same *Apostle* speaks, Offences against *Natural Religion*, or for *violation of Godliness*, commanded by the *Law of Nature*; then *quietness* and *peace of life* is justly denied you.

But

But *if you ſuffer as Chriſtians, rejoice and be exceeding glad* when you come to ſuffer upon the account of that excellent Religion reveal'd from Heaven, and aſſur'd to you; here there is no ſuffering juſtly due to you, therefore your ſufferings ſhall be recompenced to you with *Divine Glory* from Heaven, from whence *Chriſtianity* is revealed.

Let us lay the whole together: At that very time when *Magiſtrates* were *Heathens*, and enemies to *Chriſtian Religion*, and Chriſtians could pay them *no obedience* in receding from *Chriſtianity*; ſo that upon the point of Chriſtianity, there was not the mutual obligation of obedience and protection; yet there was ſtill a common center wherein even in Religious Conſiderations, the Protection of Magiſtrates, and the Obedience of Chriſtians was to meet, and that uncontroverſably on both ſides good: and what could that be, but as one place calls it *godlineſs and honeſty*, another *good works*, another *doing well?*

This then is the ſtandard of the worlds peace and tranquility; *Univerſal Religion*, *Abſolute Religion*, *Natural Religion*; even as *Natural Juſtice*, *Univerſal Juſtice* is the meaſure of all Tranſactions between man and man.

Yet if *Magiſtrates* will inflict *ſufferings* upon *Chriſtians*, *holding faſt their profeſſion*, they are taught by *Chriſtianity to ſuffer patiently*; not as if *ſufferings* were due to them, but that *Juſtice* may be done; Natural Religion may be maintained, one great branch of which is upholding Government in all its *Honours* and *Plenipotence*: but therefore in teſtimony to them, that *ſufferings* are not due to them, the *Spirit of God*, and *of Glory ſhall reſt upon them.* 1 Pet. 4. 14.

Even as in all undue Adminiſtrations of the Magiſtrates power, where Humane Laws, the Laws of this or that Government have taken no care; *ſuffering* is the *duty* of the *innocent*, but their *appeal* lyes *above.*

The Concluſion then is this, according to the ſenſe of the New Teſtament, where ever there is no impeachment

lyes againſt men from the violation of *Natural Religion*, their *peaceable* and *quiet lives* are the juſt right of their godlineſs and honeſty; *Praiſe*, *ſecurity*, *a ſtate out of fear* is due to them *as well-doers*, as to thoſe that do that which *is good*.

Many other are the expreſſions we meet with in the Apoſtolick Writings looking this Way, that the great *Letters of commendation to mankind in general*, concerning perſons and their ways in Religion, ſo far as the thing comes under their *judicature*, is the *intrinſick* and *real goodneſs* of their *Profeſſion* and *Lives* at the *beam* of *Natural Conſcience*.

Jam. 2. 8. Rom. 14. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 15. & 3. 16.

This is the *Royal Law every one is to fulfil: in theſe things we muſt ſerve Chriſt*, that we may be *accepted of God*, and *approved of men:* Thus they muſt *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour*; thus they muſt take care againſt the *Name of God being blaſphemed*; thus *they muſt put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men, and make them aſhamed*. Now it is true, all the ſeverity of Profeſſion and Life, according to *Natural Religion*, will not juſtifie the truth or goodneſs of an *aſſumed Religion* as *revealed from God*, as of the *ſober Moral Heathen*, *Jew*, *Turk*, *Papiſt*, *or any Maſter of Sect of moſt unblameable life among Proteſtants*; that is, to be tryed in a *Conſiſtory* proper to it: the *Arguments* and *Evidences* of it being *reveal'd*, are to be weighed; the nature, ſcope and tendency of it, and all its Principles are to be examined; and at laſt it ſtands at *Gods Judgment-ſeat*, where it ought to be judged. But thus the Argument is the more enforced, that where there are the *Teſtimonials* of *Natural Religion* fairly written in the behalf of any *Religion*, and the *Profeſſors* of it, though we are not, nor may have reaſon to be induced by the *Motives* of *Credibility* it gives, *to approve our ſelves to God, or ſeek everlaſting happineſs in it*; yet the *right hand* of *Humanity* in allowing *Peaceable Lives*, is to be given them.

Having thus far inſiſted upon *Scripture*, in the proof of this Aſſertion, I come now to argue it by Reaſon, and under

der every Argument to obſerve the Objections that may be made againſt it.

Argum. 1. And in the firſt place I argue from the *great Excellency of Natural Religion*, and the *Acceptableneſs of it to God*; that therefore, ſince it is alſo *general Religion*, it ought to be the *Center of common peace in Religion*; we ought to allow the Hoſpitableneſs of Humanity to all that profeſs it, and Dogmatize nothing, but what upon due hearing and diſcourſe they offer to make out conſiſtent, and fairly agreeing with it: For it is but reaſonable, even upon a violent ſuſpition of the contrary, to inquire, hear and receive Reaſon, if it can be given; as in the caſe of the *Altar of Teſtimony*, we read of *Joſhua* 22. 10. God made the World, and all the Magnificencies of it, at the firſt, to entertain men of *this general and excellent Religion.* And the Apoſtle *Peter* ſaith, as in Revival of what had been long miſtaken; *I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons; but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs* (the two Comprehenſive parts of *this Religion*) *is accepted of him.* Acts 10. 34.

Why then ſhould mankind imbrue their hands, and that upon *the Account of Religion*, in the blood of thoſe that are of the ſame Religion they themſelves are, or ought to be, and hold no contradiction to it?

What excellent perſons were *Job*, his *three Friends*, and *Elihu*, though out of *the Family of Abraham*; I mean out of that part of it, where God had more eminently fix'd his Church; and out of *that line, wherein all the Families of the Earth were to be bleſſed*? How excellent the Books of their Religion, and Ratiocinations upon it? though the Friends were miſtaken in urging too far, as if preſent Afflictions were a detection from Heaven of Inſincerity, and applying it to *Job*: That moſt deſirable Book of Holy Scripture was undoubtedly, by the ſpecial Wiſdom of God, pre-

pared as a Treatiſe of *Natural Theology*, rais'd to its own height, through the Aſſiſtances and Inſpirations of the *Holy Spirit*, and wherein moſt probably the ſenſe of all the *Pious Patriarchs* kept freſh and pure from Corruption, was maintain'd, and improv'd upon the proper Reaſons of *Natural Religion*; for we meet with no intermixture of poſitive Precepts, or Rites, except the *Hiſtorical Relation* of *Sacrifices*, in the beginning, and end of the Book; An Inſtitution of God, by which men were taught in the beginning of the World, as ſoon as *ſin* had *entred it*, to look for *Atonement with God*, through that *great Sacrifice of Chriſt*, to be *offer'd in the end of the world*; to whom it is moſt probable *Job* makes ſome very ſignificant References, though according to the Covertneſs of ſo great a myſtery at that time.

But what point of Natural Religion, even ſenſe of Natural Corruption, and the evil of ſin, of Faith in Divine Mercy, and Repentance, of Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, Soberneſs, Fidelity, Chaſtity, Temperance, Charity and Mercy to the poor is left untouched? What point relating to the Worſhip of God, againſt Atheiſm, Idolatry, *an Iniquity own'd to deſerve puniſhment from a Judg*, is not here ſtated? Prayers, Praiſes, Holy Meditations, Diſcourſes, and Attendances on the Word of God, *for the knowledg of his ways*, have here their frequent mentions: What ſevere Reproofs, Cenſures, and Condemnations of all wickedneſs do we meet with? And which is moſt remarkable, through the whole, *All* is *Subſtantial*, *nothing Ceremonial*. How lovely is ſuch a Religion? Our Saviour obſerving but ſome of the lines of it in the young man in the Goſpel; it is ſaid, *He look'd upon him, and lov'd him.*

Job 31. 28.

Mat. 10. 21.

And the *Scribe*, that had ſo much of the notion of it, he commended, *as not far from the Kingdom of Heaven*, viz. from *True Chriſtianity here*, and *Eternal Salvation hereafter.*

In

In this Book of *Job* we have alſo the true natural way of propagating Religion, and reconciling differences in it, *viz.* by Diſcourſe and Argument, *only heinous offences, and plain violations of Duty in Natural Religion, are cited to the Magiſtrates Tribunal.*

I have inſiſted ſo long upon this, becauſe we have not ſuch another *Hypotheſis* in Scripture; ſuch a Body of Natural Religion; ſuch a *form of ſound words* concerning it, given out by ſuch *Maſters of Aſſembly*, and yet not of that (we may call *the viſible Church*) at that time; elſe indeed the whole Scripture is full of *Natural Religion* from one end of it to the other; and *that which is leaſt in the Kingdom of Chriſt* concerning it, *is greater than all beſides.*

But, no doubt, there might be many others at that time, and all along, who were not of the *Jewiſh Proſelytiſm*, and yet great Inſtances of this ſame Natural Piety; For if *Elijah*, who had a leſs compaſs to obſerve in, and more probable opportunities of Inquiry, and even Inſpection, yet was ignorant *of ſeven thouſand in Iſrael that had not bowed their knees to Baal, but thought himſelf left alone:* how much more may lye hid from our almoſt ſuſpition, *True worſhippers of God according to Natural Religion*, all along elder times, inſpired and conducted to it by Divine Illumination? Nay, who dares be ſo bold to define, there are no ſuch now? 1 King. 19. 18.

For though it is moſt true, *There is no other name under the whole Heaven given to men, whereby they can be ſaved, but the name of Chriſt*; yet we are not ſure that Name muſt be expreſly known, but that the *God of pardoning-mercies giving and accepting repentance unto life, may by Divine Equity and Favour be interpreted God in Chriſt*, in the behalf of men ſo *addreſſing God*, as he is truly ſo in himſelf. Acts 4. 12.

Yet alas! we cannot ſtretch our charitable hopes ſo, as to think this the caſe of the generality of the Nations, that *know not Chriſt, who lye in the valley of the ſhadow of death*; not only as ignorant of Chriſt, but as *without God, the true*

God

pared as a Treatiſe of *Natural Theology*, rais'd to its own height, through the Aſſiſtances and Inſpirations of the *Holy Spirit*, and wherein moſt probably the ſenſe of all the *Pious Patriarchs* kept freſh and pure from Corruption, was maintain'd, and improv'd upon the proper Reaſons of *Natural Religion*; for we meet with no intermixture of poſitive Precepts, or Rites, except the *Hiſtorical Relation* of *Sacrifices*, in the beginning, and end of the Book; An Inſtitution of God, by which men were taught in the beginning of the World, as ſoon as *ſin* had *entred it*, to look for *Atonement with God*, through that *great Sacrifice of Chriſt*, to be *offer'd in the end of the world*; to whom it is moſt probable *Job* makes ſome very ſignificant References, though according to the Covertneſs of ſo great a myſtery at that time.

But what point of Natural Religion, even ſenſe of Natural Corruption, and the evil of ſin, of Faith in Divine Mercy, and Repentance, of Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, Soberneſs, Fidelity, Chaſtity, Temperance, Charity and Mercy to the poor is left untouched? What point relating to the Worſhip of God, againſt Atheiſm, Idolatry, *an Iniquity own'd to deſerve puniſhment from a Judg*, is not here ſtated? Prayers, Praiſes, Holy Meditations, Diſcourſes, and Attendances on the Word of God, *for the knowledg of his ways*, have here their frequent mentions: What ſevere Reproofs, Cenſures, and Condemnations of all wickedneſs do we meet with? And which is moſt remarkable, through the whole, *All* is *Subſtantial*, *nothing Ceremonial*. How lovely is ſuch a Religion? Our Saviour obſerving but ſome of the lines of it in the young man in the Goſpel; it is ſaid, *He look'd upon him, and lov'd him.*

Job 31. 28.

Mat. 10. 21.

And the *Scribe*, that had ſo much of the notion of it, he commended, *as not far from the Kingdom of Heaven*, viz. from *True Chriſtianity here*, and *Eternal Salvation hereafter.*

In

In this Book of *Job* we have alſo the true natural way of propagating Religion, and reconciling differences in it, *viz.* by Diſcourſe and Argument, *only heinous offences, and plain violations of Duty in Natural Religion, are cited to the Magiſtrates Tribunal.*

I have inſiſted ſo long upon this, becauſe we have not ſuch another *Hypotheſis* in Scripture; ſuch a Body of Natural Religion; ſuch a *form of ſound words* concerning it, given out by ſuch *Maſters of Aſſembly*, and yet not of that (we may call *the viſible Church*) at that time; elſe indeed the whole Scripture is full of *Natural Religion* from one end of it to the other; and *that which is leaſt in the Kingdom of Chriſt* concerning it, *is greater than all beſides.*

But, no doubt, there might be many others at that time, and all along, who were not of the *Jewiſh Proſelytiſm*, and yet great Inſtances of this ſame Natural Piety; For if *Elijah*, who had a leſs compaſs to obſerve in, and more probable opportunities of Inquiry, and even Inſpection, yet was ignorant *of ſeven thouſand in Iſrael that had not bowed their knees to Baal, but thought himſelf left alone:* how much more may lye hid from our almoſt ſuſpition, *True worſhippers of God according to Natural Religion*, all along elder times, inſpired and conducted to it by Divine Illumination? Nay, who dares be ſo bold to define, there are no ſuch now? 1 King. 19. 18.

For though it is moſt true, *There is no other name under the whole Heaven given to men, whereby they can be ſaved, but the name of Chriſt*; yet we are not ſure that Name muſt be expreſly known, but that the *God of pardoning-mercies giving and accepting repentance unto life, may by Divine Equity and Favour be interpreted God in Chriſt*, in the behalf of men ſo *addreſſing God*, as he is truly ſo in himſelf. Acts 4. 12.

Yet ahlas! we cannot ſtretch our charitable hopes ſo, as to think this the caſe of the generality of the Nations, that *know not Chriſt, who lye in the valley of the ſhadow of death*; not only as ignorant of Chriſt, but as *without God, the true God*

God in the world; Horrible *Corrupters* of what they *naturally know*, that is, of *Natural Religion*. But as there were many *Lepers* and *Widows* in the days of thoſe *two Prophets*, but to one of each were they ſent; ſo we may hope there are ſome Inſtances of this *Divine Bounty* and *Grace*, if we can hope ſo but of few; but *theſe ſecret things belong to the Lord our God*; and it's ſafeſt not to preſume too far on either ſide: yet by the ſame Charity we allow *Papiſts*, that the prevalency of truly Chriſtian principles may Antidote the poyſon of Popery; ſo the pregnancy of ſome natural principles riſe up above all the refuſe in ſuch Souls; *but, oh Lord! thou only knoweſt!* Yet ſome things I dare be bold to affirm,

Luk. 4. 25.

Deut. 29. 29.

1. That if any man live uprightly, as *Job*, according to the Laws of Natural Religion, at its full extent, and *hath the knowledg of Chriſt offer'd him*; he will receive it upon the advantageous Recommendations of it in Gods own time and way.

2. That if any man ſo obeys the Precepts of *Natural Religion*, and hath not the *Revelation of Chriſt*, *the want of that Revelation* ſhall not be charged upon him, ſo much as in the conſequences of it.

3. That whoever underſtands *Natural Religion*, muſt needs underſtand that *ſin is in the world*; that *man is born like the wild Aſſes Colt, and drinks iniquity like water*; *and yet that God is patient, ſpeaks once and twice*, in order to mens Converſion and Repentance. That therefore there is *place for it in pardoning-mercy*, of which in God, even *Humane Nature* it ſelf hath a *ſenſe*; *Natural Religion* cannot be ignorant of this; for without it, all ſervice of God, or Application to him would be in vain, and but *like the ſervice of Devils*.

Job 15. 16. 33. 14.

Yet I cannot but here take notice, There is not ſuch a *learned World in Morals*, as was heretofore among the *Græcians* & *Romans*, ſuch as *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Epictetus*, *Cicero*, *Seneca*,

Seneca; nor as thoſe of later date, *Plutarch*, *Porphyry*, *Hierocles*, *Jamblicus*. But as that *one ſacrifice* aboliſh'd the Typical, yet divinely inſtituted Sacrifices, (much more thoſe mock-ſacrifices, that there are no ſuch now in the more famous Religions in the world, as *divine Oracles*, and *Prophecies*, *abſolv'd* and *finiſh'd in Chriſt* and the *Apoſtles*) ſilenc'd all thoſe *fallacious ones* from below; ſo the *reſplendent light of Natural Religion in the Goſpel-revelation*, ſince its prevalency in the world, and that it is become the Religion of Nations, ſeems to have dazled *natural reaſon*, that there is not the *apparence* of it as in *former ages*; but a kind of *barbarity* hath invaded, as a *thick darkneſs*, the world *out of the* Goſhen *of Chriſtianity*; while the *Jews* truſt to *the letter of the Old Teſtament*, not yet unvail'd to them *in its glory*, and further obſcur'd by *Rabbinick Dotages*; and *Mahometans* to the *Spite-prophet*, and his *ſenſeleſs Alchoran*, ſet up by Satan, and permitted by Divine Juſtice in oppoſition to the only *true Prophet*, the *Lord of life and glory*, and his *everlaſting Goſpel*. All beſides theſe lye obſcure, and at a diſtance from us, in a manner like a *Terra Incognita* in Reaſon and Religion, having only ſome relational glimpſes, no bodies of their diſcourſe in either. A great argument of the *Truth* of Chriſtian Religion, that hath drawn up all Rational Religion, Reaſon, and Learning within it ſelf, and under its own Horizon. 2 Cor. 3. 15.

For though for a time it pleaſed God to allow the notable efforts of that ſort of learning, and in oppoſition to Chriſtianity, one of his unſearchable Judgments, as in *Porphyry* and *Hierocles*; yet being vanquiſhed by the greater light of the Goſpel, ſince the days of *Conſtantine*, it hath never riſen in any other parts of the *world unchriſtianiz'd*, to appear with any remarkable ſtrength.

But all this doth not diminiſh ſo much from *Natural Religion*, as it brings it into queſtion, Whether there is now ſuch a thing in the world as *Natural Religion*, without Chriſtianity? nay indeed, it may be doubted whether not-

with-

withſtanding, or even for the ſake of thoſe *great Names* I juſt now recorded, (who were but a ſort of *Parelian lights* to the true light of *Natural Religion*) whether there was ever ſuch a true copy of it, as that of the Book of *Job*, in any mans heart, life, or writings, that was without the help of *divine Illumination*; and yet *Natural Religion* is never the leſs *natural*, nor the leſs *felt* and *acknowledg'd* to be ſo: When beſides ſuch a proportion, as is always ready to men, not degenerate into beaſts, being ſo preſerv'd by God, that
Luk. 15. 17. he may not leave *himſelf without witneſs*, nor men without means, in order to their converſion and recovery; when (I ſay) beſides this, God reſtores to any man, or number of men the perfection of it by *his Word*, or by particular *illumination of his mind*; it is not the leſs natural; even as the *prodigals Self* he came to, was not the leſs *natural Self*, becauſe he had been ſo long a *fugitive* from it, and it became neceſſary to him to be ſo reſtor'd; ſo no leſs is *Natural religion*, *natural*, becauſe it is return'd by *revelation* after being loſt. And this carries the great uſes indeed of *Natural religion*, that whether it be that part of it by general *providence* preſerv'd to the *generality* of men, or by ordinary means improved; or whether by *divine Illumination* and *Revelation*, it is given as it were anew, yet we ſtill find it *natural*, and as it were *our own*, properly belonging to our *natures*; and it comes to us as by way of *Reminiſcency* of
Pſal. 22. 27. what we *had once*, *but had loſt*. Thus *all the ends of the earth ſhall remember*, *and turn to the Lord*.

And as I have now ſtated things, that which may ſeem a great objection againſt what I have diſcourſed of *Natural Religion*, will be more eaſily reconciled.

And it is taken out of thoſe places of the Apoſtle *John*, firſt what he records in his Goſpel, that our Saviour ſaid,
Joh. 5. 23. *He that honoureth not the Son*, *honoureth not the Father that*
1 Joh. 2. 23. *ſent him*. And in his Epiſtles, *Whoever denieth the Son*, *hath*
2 Joh. 9. 10. *not the Father*. And in his ſecond Epiſtle, *Whoever tranſ-*

greſſeth

greſſeth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God; and if any man come and brings not this Doctrine, receive him not into your houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed; for he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

By all theſe ſayings laid together, it ſeems undeniable, that even the acknowledgment of that firſt and great principle of *Natural Religion*, The believing in, and adoring *the one God*, is made of no value, by not acknowledging, honouring, and believing in Chriſt the Son, which is the principal point of Divine Revelation.

For the ſetling therefore this *doubt*, theſe three Things are to be conſider'd:

1. That after due Inſtruction and Explanation of the *Doctrine of Chriſt*, it is, as I have ſaid, ſo united with *Natural Religion*, that who ever hath that in ſincerity, is τεταγμένος, ſet in a poſture ready to receive and believe Chriſtianity. So that if any one upon Inſtruction commenſurate to the Underſtanding *Chriſtian Religion*, does not receive it, *he hath not God*, he hath not true *Natural Religion* in that *Fundamental point*, eſpecially if he have had the Preparations of Divine Revelation in the *Old Teſtament*, as the *Jews*, to whom theſe words were eſpecially directed, had. Yet ſtill, I ſuppoſe this caſe reſerv'd to Divine judgment, and not to Humane; nor that ſuch an unbeliever may be dealt with by men, or by *Magiſtratical Authority*, as an Athieſt; man can only deal with him by *Remonſtrances* out of *Scripture*, and *reaſons* flowing from it.

2. The ſeverity of the Apoſtle hath greater force upon thoſe who having receiv'd Chriſtianity, *apoſtatize* from it; *tranſgreſſing* and not *abiding in the Doctrine of Chriſt*; for it is moſt certain in the thing it ſelf, they have not, nor can have *Natural Religion*, that prove *Apoſtates from Chriſtianity* underſtood, ſo intimate to it.

3. This hath yet much greater force upon thoſe whom

the Apoſtle ſeems eſpecially in his Epiſtles to intend; thoſe *who come with a high pretenſion* of an *extraordinary ſpirit*, of an *immediate Doctrine from Heaven*, and yet bring not the Doctrine of Chriſt. For there being at that time ſuch infallible proofs and aſſurances of all ſorts, to the Apoſtles, and that have deſcended down from them to us in *Sacred Hiſtory*; we muſt needs conclude, they might juſtly *Anathematize* in the higheſt degree, an *Angel from heaven that*
Gal. 1. 8. *preacht any other Goſpel*; they were moſt certain, who ever *call'd* or *proclaim'd Chriſt*, *Lord*, were authoriz'd to do ſo
1 Cor. 12. 3. by the *Spirit of God*, and therefore *that no man could by the ſame ſpirit declare him accurſed*, ſeeing *that Spirit* could not contradict it ſelf.

No *dream*, *wonder*, or *prædiction* however *fulfilled*, was
Deut. 13. 1. *Authentick* enough to draw the *Jews* from the true God, that had ſo *ſupremely demonſtrated* himſelf to them; nor might *any Angel* or *Spirit*, that is, *Immediate Inſpiration*, or Doctrine given by it, ſeduce them from Chriſt, ſo evidently
Gal. 6. 17. ſeal'd to them in the *New*, *by God the Father*; and therefore all pretenſions to the contrary, how high ſoever, are to be rejected with deteſtation.

They knew, All that endeavoured it, muſt know themſelves *deceivers*, the greateſt *crime* againſt *Natural Religion*; and indeed none ſo ſubject to *Humane Inquiry*, to their detection, or ſeverity when detected, as *Impoſtors* pretending Divine Revelation. Nor to their moſt *Authoritative reſtraints* and *repreſſions*, as the *wild Enthuſiaſt*, though with more mercy, becauſe he is *himſelf* ſo *greatly deceiv'd* and *deluded*.

And next to theſe, an Apoſtate from Chriſtianity can hardly, if at all, give ſuch an account of himſelf to *Chriſtian Powers*, as ſhould clear him from being a moſt *hainous offender* againſt *Natural Religion*.

The ſum then is this: He to whom *Chriſtianity* is propos'd as *faithful and worthy of all acceptation*, with ſuch aſ-

ſurances

ſurances of it from *Natural Religion*, and its *own evidences*, as are ſufficient to draw any man intelligent and conſcientious, to it, and *yet rejects* and *refuſes him that ſpeaks from Heaven to him*; is to be delivered over to the *Judgment of God*, who *will judg the ſecrets of all hearts by that very Goſpel of Truth*, Rom. 2. 16.

He that *apoſtatizes* from it, when he hath once received it, may be juſtly call'd to the moſt ſtrict account by *Chriſtian Magiſtrates*; and as they find reaſon, further *cenſur'd* or *puniſh'd*, it being ordinarily impoſſible there ſhould be ſuch an *Apoſtate* from ſo excellent a Religion once *taſted*, *but with greateſt violation of Natural Religion and Conſcience*; he that pretends Divine Revelation againſt that which hath ſo *ample a pattent* from *Heaven*, may moſt righteouſly be firſt diſcover'd, expos'd, and after dealt with as the moſt *flagitious ſelf-guilty Deceiver*, by *Chriſtian Rulers*, who are the *Miniſters of divine vengeance* in ſuch caſes; and Rom. 13. 4.
by private Chriſtians, for *his natural evil works*, caſt out of their whole Society, *Religious* or Civil; except he appear an *Enthuſiaſtick Phrenetick*, who in pity to him is to be ſhut up in a *Bethlehem*, from doing ſo great injury to himſelf and others.

And thus I have finiſh'd the firſt Argument, concerning the acceptableneſs of *Natural Religion* to *God our Saviour*, guiding my ſelf in it by this Rule: *Viz.*

The moſt *comprehenſive Religion* in *charity to others*, while we keep to main foundations in our *charity*, and to the *pureſt ſtricteſt Rules* in our ſelves, we can attain to, is certainly the beſt, and moſt like that *one God*, and *one Mediator*, the *common boſom* of *love*, *peace*, *hope*, *reſt*.

The 2. Arg. *Proving Natural Religion is fit to be the center of common peace, and agreement in Religion, is this: There is an Univerſal Code of Natural Religion, of which every man hath a part for himſelf, ſo that we may all appeal one to ano-* Arg. 2.

ther, as it were to page and line, whether it be not ſo written in that book of the Law within us? Whether ſuch a thing be not our duty, and whether we have not ſin'd in doing contrary? And indeed thus to do is the univerſal uſage of men in all their debates one with another. *As face anſwers to face in water, ſo the heart of man to man* in this Natural Religion; as the parts of Humane body agree in *all men*, ſo do theſe proportions and lineaments of *ſouls*.

We may with greater certainty ſolicite men upon theſe Principles, than evil men tempt one another upon common depravation: For corruption, though all one in the fountain, yet lyes in more ſeveral veins than theſe laws of natural Conſcience; ſo that men may be miſs'd by thoſe that tempt them out of their proper inclinations to evils, as hitt in the wrong vein.

But there are none of theſe lines of natural Conſcience wanting in any man, nor an aptneſs to be mov'd in them; if ſearcht to the quick, they will feel it to conviction, though too often not to converſion.

The Apoſtle in preaching to *Fælix*, ſtruck him in the Sentiments of *Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come*, as in *maſter-veins*, and knew he muſt take place, as it prov'd in his *trembling*.

So in his Diſcourſe, *Act.* 17. he fell upon that univerſal ſenſe of a Divine Being, and his excellent Nature, of which he was ſure there was a counter-part within them.

He did not firſt preach Chriſt to them, a point without them; but getting within them in natural Principles, he aſſayed by the continuity and ſimilarneſs of the one with the other, to intwine (as with admirable artifice he does) thoſe Natural Principles with Chriſtianity.

Our Saviour indeed dealt with the *Jews* in more abſolute and poſitive terms, becauſe *natural conſcience* lay higher and nearer to *ſupernatural inſtructions*, by their acquaintance and familiarity with the *Oracles of God committed to them.*

But

But in dealing with those that had not those Revelations, the *Prophets* and *Apostles* center their Applications to them in this *Universal Religion*, and with great reason and expectation of success. As *Daniel* to *Nebuchadnezzar*, *I counsel thee to break off thy sins by righteousness, and by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthning of thy tranquillity:* This was Natural Doctrine, and fit to be addressed to a Prince never so much a stranger to *Divine Revelation*. For this is a Religion known to all the world, and therefore that in which all may most reasonably unite. Dan. 4. 27.

This is that a *Magistrate* may with greatest *Authority* demand *conformity* to of his *subjects*, and they oblig'd to obey; as the King of *Niniveh* most justly enjoin'd *publick Humiliation* and *repentance* in the case of so great and imminent Judgment. Jon. 3. 7.

For every *Magistrate* is suppos'd as a *Magistrate* to have good knowledg of this Law, of which he as a man hath a copy, as the *Kings of Israel* had of the revealed Law; and in which (as they in that) he ought to be conversant, that he *may be just that ruleth over men, ruling in the fear of God.* 2 Sam. 23. 3.

Of this also, every *subject* hath a *copy*, that he may know his duty, and observe it. Hence therefore *Universal conformity* is an *unquestionable obligation*, when he that commands, and they who are to obey, have both the same *just weights* and *measures* committed to them; one in order to Rule and Government, the other in order to Obedience and Subjection; such as cannot disagree, no more than *sealed weights* and *measures* in general Traffick, and which each have a standard of, and may (except inexcusable ignorance, negligence, or injustice be in the fault) have an immediate recourse to.

But beyond this, what of Compulsion there can be, I do not understand: Every *Revelation* is received by *Faith*; and *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

It

It is the ſword of the Spirit that is to make the way, and not the ſword of the Magiſtrate that is to cut it.

Chriſtianity, ſubſtantial, fundamental Chriſtianity, hath the beſt claim to the Edicts of Principalities and Powers for it, there being no other *Revelation* except that in the world, but what is counterfeit and ſpurious; no other Religion ſo inducible upon truly Natural Principles: and in *Chriſtianity*, it is the *ſubſtantial Chriſtianity*, not every *nice Diſpute* or *Definition*, much leſs *additional Mode* or *Ceremony* that hath this claim.

And yet notwithſtanding ſuch a claim, I make doubt whether ever any ſober Chriſtian would wiſh *Chriſtianity* propagated with Force, much leſs with Blood and Cruelty; like the *Popiſh Converſion of the Indians*. I believe no true Chriſtian, no truly Proteſtant Chriſtian, ever did deſire it, or think it agreeing with *Chriſtianity*.

And let not the *Compulſory Laws* of *Jewiſh Religion* plead a coerciveneſs for the *Chriſtian* upon the Reaſon that a better Religion more deſerves it: for *Firſt*, The better the Religion, the better Methods of introducing and recommending it, are deſirable; as much therefore as *Inſtruction* excels *Bruti ſh Force*, as much as *ſincere Compliance* of Judgment, Reaſon and Underſtanding excel *Hypocriſie* and *feigned Conformities*, as much as *Divine Impulſes* and *Suaſions* of the *Holy Spirit* excel the *Power of Laws* enforced with *Penalties*, or being of the *Religion* of the *Prince* for *Mode, Compliment or Preferment*; ſo much ought the way of introducing men into the moſt *excellent Religion* of *Chriſtianity*, exceed and ſurpaſs all other ways that can be deviſed to draw men to any *meaner Religion* than it; and as much eaſier may be the effect. In *Natural Religion* men are not to be drawn into it, they are created with it, they are and muſt be of it, and are only puniſhed for not acting ſuitable to it.

In *Revealed Religion* their own *judgment* and *choice* moved

ved by *ſuitable Arguments*, both enters and retains them in it; though, as I have before obſerved, the caſe of the Apoſtate from *main Chriſtianity*, arguing an offence againſt *Natural Religion*, may be of a *different conſideration.*

Further, In the *Jewiſh Religion* the *immediate government of God*, that *liv'd as a Prince* in the midſt of them, made their caſe different from any other that ever was in the world; their *Meſſages from Heaven* being ſo immediate and diſtinct, *their conſultations* in caſes of doubt with the *Divine Will* being ſo near at hand, and the *Evidences* of *all* being ſo clear and undoubted, that the *ſenſibleneſs* of them equalled the very aſſurance of the *Laws of Nature.*

The Objections that I can foreſee againſt this Argument, lye theſe two ways.

If the Laws of Nature *are ſo clear and evident, how comes it to paſs there is ſo great a darkneſs and ignorance in multitudes of perſons, yea in Nations, concerning* theſe Laws? *And yet how much leſs is the Obedience paid to them? And laſtly, how comes it to paſs there never was ſuch a* Concord and Agreement *in them?*

In Anſwer to this I ſhould only briefly rejoin theſe two things.

1. That notwithſtanding this, there always hath been, and will be ſuch *Evidences* of the *Truth*, *Righteouſneſs*, *Reaſonableneſs*, and *Naturalneſs* of theſe Religious Principles, that no more can they be baniſhed out of *Humane nature*, than the *Notions of Health*, *Beauty*, *Happineſs* can be extinguiſhed in the world, notwithſtanding all the diſeaſe, variation from the exact model of *Beauty*, and laſtly, the *Unhappineſs*, *Miſery* and *Complaint* ſo *univerſal* in the *world*; ſo that though there is not any Example of the perfection of any of theſe in this world, and very great and general *Deficiencies* from them: yet the Notions of every

very one are whole and intire, and ſuch repreſentations and approaches to what we mean in them are ſo viſible, as to take away all doubt of the things themſelves, and of the deſirableneſs of them; even ſo it is in this *Natural Religion.*

2. The whole diſadvantage then of *Natural Religion* objected, muſt be imputed to the miſerable *depravation of mankind*, to that degree, that the moſt excellent things ſo loſe their effect, as even to ſeem to loſe themſelves; yet ſtill they remain, and ſo remain, as to require and even exact their acknowledgment, and ſo demand that due effect, and that ſo powerfully, that the *juſtice of the demand preſſed home*, cannot be *denied*; and thus it is in *Natural Religion.*

2. Object. *It may be objected for the enforcement of Revealed Religion by ſeverities, That when the Reaſons of it are laid before men (as of the* true Chriſtian Religion*) lying in a* ſtraight *and* even line *from Natural Religion to it, it can only* be the Brutiſhneſs *and* Obſtinacy *of men that they do not receive it, which may be juſtly puniſhed as againſt the* Laws of Nature; *and the* interpretation of Puniſhment *ſhall be, not as intended to compel them into the* Chriſtian Religion, *but to chaſtiſe their* Beaſt-like Senſleſneſs *or* Obſtinacy.

In Anſwer to this I would re-enforce theſe three things.

1. As to the main of the Objection, there is ſo great a difference between *Naturals* that will certainly riſe up at earneſt and vehement ſummons, being within already, though they may lye hid and deep; and what is purely from without and muſt enter through thoſe *multiform, Meander'd, twiſted* and *twined paſſages* of mens *Underſtandings* and *intellectual Belief*, through varieties of Tempers, Educations, Principles, men have moſt convers'd with, and rivetted their whole ſouls into; that it is impoſſible for any but God

God alone, who ſearches the heart, to know, where the guilty obſtruction lyes, when the ſcrews of truth, and the receptacles of mens minds do not reciprocate and anſwer one another; where the key of Truth and the wards of mens thoughts ſo diſſent, as not to be reconciled; ſo that this muſt be left for ever as to *Divine Omnipotency* in the efficacy, ſo to the *Divine Judgment* where the fault is, of mens not *receiving* what is ſo graciouſly *offered from Heaven.*

2. Therefore to pretend to judg obſtinacy, or inſenſibleneſs, or whatever other faulty Reaſon we have prepared of mens not receiving the Religion we would impoſe, is to aſſume Divine prerogative to our ſelves, and to become Judges in His peculiar Court, or to contrive an *Artifice* to cheat an *acknowledged Principle*, (viz. *not compelling Revealed Religion*) of its *due Obedience*; and laſtly, to cloath innocent perſons, for any thing we know, with the *Sambenito*, painted with Devils or Beaſts skins, wherein they may appear guilty with the diſguiſe we have put upon them, though out of that they cannot with Charity be concluded nocent, or guilty of thoſe particulars, we charge them with.

All this is to be underſtood, when the offence, and the particular offence (it being not enough in this caſe to ſay there is ſome offence without *ſpecial matter charged* againſt Natural Laws) is not as evident, as in any other caſe of humane judicature; and where the only proof that men are otherwiſe guilty in not receiving the Faith we offer them, is only this, that they do not receive it.

3. If this puniſhing men for not receiving a Revealed Religion, were only for not receiving *ſubſtantial Chriſtian Religion*, it were the more tollerable; though as I have ſaid, not deſirable to any *true Chriſtian Proteſtant*; but when it's ſtretch'd out to *Falſe Religion*, to every *nice Opinion*, *Ceremony* or *Mode of worſhip*, it is a *burthen* mankind could never bear, being moſt *intollerable*: And ſo I have done with *this ſecond Argument.*

Argum. 3. I proceed to a third Argument, *Juſtifying Natural Religion to be the term of univerſal peace and concord*; ſo far that if that be ſecur'd, men ſhould acquieſce in peace one with another, in things that concern Religion; *Magiſtrates allowing common protection, and people the common benevolence of Humanity; as upon a ruled and determined caſe*, that *Reaſon and Truth* ought to have, according to the *Divine Will*, and the very *Laws of Nature, a Through-fare in the world, free as the Air and Light*, and that by an *Ordinance as early as of the day.*

Before I argue this, I premiſe, That all Religious Freedoms are under the *intire acknowledgment of Princes* within their own *Dominions in all cauſes, and over all perſons, as well Eccleſiaſtical, as Civil* (in the very ſenſe of the Church of *England*) *ſupreme Moderators, and Governours.*

As alſo, that it is more deſirable all things of a Religious concern ſhould have the countenance, encouragement, and example of *Authority*, and the *Symphony of Communities.*

Yet ſtill with this *condition*, it is the *Birthright* of every man to be avowedly and publickly Religious, according to thoſe Rules he believes, agreeable to the *Divine Will, Natural Religion being Judg.* And that this is according to the very *inſtitution of God himſelf*, and no way inconſiſtent with the Laws of ſubjection to Magiſtracy, or being a *commodious* and *agreeable member of a Community.*

For if there be not ſuch a *Natural Freedom*, there is no way left, ſince that general corruption of Religion in the world, for a man ordinarily to reduce himſelf, and induce others *to reform themſelves and their open profeſſion of God, to true and regular thoughts and acknowledgments of God, his worſhip and ſervice*, and the ways of pleaſing him in order to the *eternal enjoyment* of him.

For it often falls out in the world, that Magiſtrates and People ſit in their *Idol-Temple of a falſe Religion*, guarded with their Laws for Uniformity, environed with their own

own Canons and Conſtitutions, and threatning *ſevereſt penalties to any diſturber.* Though we have reaſon *to bleſs God our lines are fallen in pleaſant places; yea we have a goodly inheritance* of Religion by our Laws; which very much bribes our judgment of the *Dureſſe* of *Impoſitions in Religion*, becauſe we only conſider it in *ceremonies impos'd*, and do not *turn our ſelves to behold the abominations* in other Nations, not only committed but *framed by a Law.* But *Impoſition* is *impoſition* in the leaſt things in Religion, *not natural*; and opens the way to it in the greateſt.

If it be not therefore before-hand taken care of by ſuch an *Immunity*, reſerv'd to *Humane nature*, notwithſtanding *Government* and *Subjection* to Rulers, that moſt fundamental principle of *Natural Religion*, in *Piety* towards *God*, iſſuing it ſelf in *declarations* of his *Name, Truth*, and *Glory*; *in charity and compaſſion* to the *ſouls of men*, (whoſe caſe, though not themſelves, *cry out, as the man of* Macedonia *in* Paul's *viſion, Come and help us*) muſt lye ſtill as a Talent hid in a Napkin, and buried in the earth; or muſt encounter and fall foul with another *Law of nature* viz. of *Subjection* and *Obedience* to *Magiſtrates* in their Religious Laws. Act. 16. 9.

But if their *right to command* only in and according to *Natural Religion*, the beſt, moſt honourable, and ſafe command that God thought fit to depoſite with men, that they ſhould hold the Golden Reigns of *Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs, Soberneſs*, far greater than of *ceremonies*, and ſafer than of Revealed Religion, a *chariot too divine for man to govern:* If this, I ſay, be the caſe, men need not cloiſter Religion in their breaſt for fear of violating ſo awful a *Sanction*, as that of *Magiſtracy.* Nor while they confeſs it (neither afraid, nor aſham'd of the publick diſcountenance), do any thing injurious to Divine Diſpoſition of power to Rulers.

If this were not the true, natural, legal ſtate of things in relation to Religion and Magiſtrates, and the very Ordination of God in Creation concerning them, this further

grand inconvenience would follow, That the moſt excellent Religion of our *Lord* and *Saviour*, ſo careful of all juſt rights and duty, *Dividing to Cæſar the things that are Cæſars, and reſerving to God the things that are Gods*; yet that this Religion came in as it were treading upon *the necks of Princes*, and their Laws, and diſacknowledging that power entruſted with them by God, the power of firſt Decreeing Religion, though it were allowed, *He* intended only the *true* Religion.

Luk. 20. 25.

For it is moſt evident, Chriſtian Religion came into the world *againſt the will of all Humane Powers.*

I know it will be ſaid, Our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* in regard of their immediate commiſſion from Heaven, of which Miracles were their Credentials, could not in the leaſt violate *Humane Power*, which falls before the Divine, as the loweſt Magiſtrate among us before the Supreme. I confeſs this is moſt true; yet ſtill it is to be conſider'd, what great care God hath of his *Moral*, *Natural*, *Fundamental conſtitutions*; and it is not at all to be believed, he would in ſo weighty a concern as *Chriſtianity*, have ſo far neglected his *Ordinance of Magiſtracy*, as not at firſt to have preſented that Doctrine, and the miraculous evidences of it to the *Vicegerents* of his *power* here upon earth; that at leaſt they ſhould have been guilty of a peremptory refuſal, before their *deputation* in the propagation of *Chriſtian Religion* had been waved by God. I cannot therefore account the Supremacy of Divine Power above Humane, the chief reaſon, that God took no more notice (not of Magiſtrates only, but) of Magiſtracy it ſelf, when he *brought in the firſt begotten*, and his *Religion into the world*; and that he did not ſay, *Let all theſe Angels of God on earth worſhip him*, in the firſt place.

We ſee in all things that could but have the appearance of being under their *proper juriſdiction*, how cautious our Saviour was not to offend; as in the caſe of *Tribute*, though he

he *as a Son over the Temple, or ſupreme Prince, was free*; yet he wrought a *miracle* on purpoſe to defray it. Mat. 17. 24.

Beſides the *propagation of Chriſtianity* was to out-laſt the *immediate commiſſion* of the *Apoſtleſhip*, and *Miracles*; and to ſurvive in ordinary preaching and diſcourſe, while the Princes of the world were yet enemies to it.

What then does this argue? but that the enforcing of true pure Natural Religion only, is the right of Earthly Powers. Not the retrenching any of the Freedoms of Natural Religion, not the impoſing any thing beſides and beyond it, by power or penalties; not the forbidding of Reformation of any corruptions invading it; not the embargoing any Revelation from Heaven, conſiſting with, or perfecting Natural Religion, (as all truly ſuch do) only the power of requiring all to live in obedience to, the puniſhment of thoſe that diſobey *Natural Laws*.

But it may be further ſaid, God intended Chriſtianity ſhould be brought in, *not by might, not by power*, but by *the Spirit of the Lord*. That Believers in it ſhould ſeal it not with Pleaſures, Honours, and outward Advantages accruing to them by it, but with their *blood* and *ſufferings*.

This is alſo moſt true, it appears God did ſo intend. But ſtill if Magiſtrates were intruſted by God with making Religion Legal, or not Legal by their ſeal; it is plain, that Divine Ordination of Magiſtracy was diſhonour'd and debas'd by him that appointed it, in that it was not at all taken notice of in ſo great an affair of the Divine Kingdom. And ſo far as they could judg, who did not believe, there was a real injury done to Powers, and the ſufferings of Chriſtians were on that account, juſt. For who could know that for ſo long a time God had ſuſpended that ſuppoſed Ordination of his, *viz.* That no Religion ſhould be brought into any State, or Kingdom, that had not firſt the favour and licenſe of the Laws and Magiſtrates of that State and Kingdom.

But

But now ſuppoſe it is a ſtated Rule, that beyond Natural Religion the Magiſtrates Power extends not; but (that being ſecur'd) there is a freedom to Subjects of taking care of their Souls, and wherein they have to do with God, as of their bodies, lives, or eſtates in private concerns; or as a Philoſopher hath of chuſing what he thinks the beſt ſyſtem and from the beſt Authors; and that men may freely reaſon herein, ſtill within the confinement of *Natural Religion*, Reverence of God, and all juſt deferences to men; and then Chriſtian Religion had a *Legal entrance*, offering no diſregard to Magiſtracy, but taking natural freedom to offer it ſelf, wherein its way being ſo prepar'd, it then opens it ſelf with all that *Divine Power* and *Authority*, that cannot be refus'd, but under the great peril of *Eternal damnation.*

Thus proportionably the caſe is the ſame concerning the *Reformation* of *Chriſtianity from Popery.*

We then that are *Chriſtians* and *Proteſtant Chriſtians*, have great reaſon to keep that door of the juſt and lawful propagation of Religon, not contrariant to *Natural Religion*, as open as we can; and to grant a quiet, *comprehenſive of all offers* that can be made, keeping within Rules of *Natural Religion*, *Reaſon* and *Prudence*; it ſeeming leſs hazard to admit thoſe inconveniences attendant upon this liberty, that through humane corruption run round with every thing, than thoſe greater miſchiefs of having Chriſtian or Proteſtant Religion violently kept out.

Thus I have endeavour'd to clear, that there are obligations lying upon men precedent to any right of Humane Authority: *viz.* of duty to God, in obeying God rather than men; of the Profeſſion, Confeſſion, and publication of true Religion, however men forbid or ſcorn it; of rational communication of truth, as the Apoſtles ſaid, *We cannot but ſpeak the things we have ſeen and heard*; of charity to mens ſouls in not concealing the tydings of Salvation,

Act. 4. 12.

on, the Righteouſneſs and Truth of God. For certainly *David* expreſſes himſelf according to the Laws of Natural Religion, when he ſays, *I have preacked righteouſneſs in the great congregation. I have not refrained my lips, Oh Lord, thou knoweſt. I have not hid thy righteouſneſs in my heart. I have declared thy faithfulneſs and thy ſalvation. I have not concealed thy loving-kindneſs and thy truth from the great congregation.* And *Moſes* when he ſays, *Give ear, Oh ye Heavens, and I will ſpeak: and hear Oh earth, the words of my mouth: my doctrine ſhall drop as the rain, my ſpeech ſhall diſtill as the dew, becauſe I will publiſh the name of the Lord: Aſcribe ye greatneſs to our God.* Pſal. 40. 9, 10 Deut. 32. 1, 2, 3

Yet from hence I do not ſuppoſe any man bound to go and preach to the Great *Turk*, either the Laws of Natural Religion againſt any of the *iniquities* of that *tyranny*, or *follies* of that *ſuperſtition*; or the juſt and holy Laws and Truths of Chriſtianity inſtead of his worſe than *Anile Alcoran.*

Every man is to meaſure his *commiſſion*, and the *enablements* he hath receiv'd from God for his work, and not to venture upon things *beyond his line.* For even the Apoſtles knew their meaſures, *the meaſure of the rule diſtributed them by God; a meaſure reaching ſo far, beyond which they did not ſtretch themſelves*, in that famous place, 2 *Cor.* 10. 13. Every man may compute the probable account his ſervice will turn to in the *Glory of God*, and the *Salvation of mens ſouls.* Chriſt teaches him to forbear, when it is certain before hand, *His pearls will be trodden under foot, and himſelf rent.* Mat. 7. 6.

And ſo I have finiſhed what I think neceſſary to be ſpoken upon this *Third Argument*, and paſs on to the *fourth.*

Argum. 4. Natural Religion may *well be the Cement of Univerſal Peace*, ſince whatever can comport with the *good of the Univerſe* or *Community*, is ſecured by it.

The

The *Glory of God*, ſo far as *Community* is charged with it.

The *Peace* and *Welfare* of *particular perſons.*

The *orderly Poſture* of every man in his *Station* and *Rank.*

The juſt deference to *Magiſtracy* and *publick Authority.*

The *ſecurity* of *publick Peace* and *Quiet.*

The *Advancement* of *True Religion* in *Divine Revelation.*

Now in every one of theſe I will conſider what Objections may be made againſt allowing freedom in Religion upon Natural Religion ſecur'd, and the Anſwers to them.

Object. 1. *Every* Falſe Religion, *or* refuſal *of the* True Religion *in a Nation, not vindicated by due ſeverity upon Offenders, is an offence againſt the* Divine Majeſty, *of a* National Guilt, *and brings down* National Judgments.

Anſwer. The *government* of *Conſcience* being *Gods peculiar*, no earthly Power ſhall be charged with the obliquities and errors of it, any more than with the *ſecret ſins* of men that are not known, or thoſe *Diſtempers* of *Mind* and *Spirit*, which coming into no *palpable Inſtances* can neither be *convicted* nor *ſentenced* by man.

Now miſtakes of men in Religion not *cogniſable* by the *light of Nature*, are to be reckon'd among the *Errors of Conſcience*, and ſo are properly left to *Gods Judgment-ſeat*, and the *Magiſtrate* ſtands free.

Iſa. 49. 23. It is therefore very obſervable, *Princes* are called *nurſing-Fathers*, and *Queens nurſing-Mothers*; ſignifying not a *Commanding-Power*, but a tender, inſinuating, cheriſhing, Tutelar Care, that the Doctrine of Salvation may have all the Encouragements from them, that ſuch an *Appellative* carryes with it, in thoſe that declare it, in thoſe that are to receive it.

The

The Magiſtrate diſcharging this *Honourable Truſt*, may acquit *himſelf* and the *Community before God* from the guilt and deſtruction of thoſe that may be yet heinouſly *guilty before God*, as *Jonah's Mariners* did from the *Blood* of that *Prophet* conſigned over *to the Sea* by his *own Sentence*, *Oh Lord! lay not this mans blood to our charge, who have done all it pleaſed thee to command us.* Jon. 1. 14

When *Soveraigns* and *Nations* have conſidered the Wiſdom, Rationality and Heavenlineſs of Propoſals in Religion, and ſetled upon what they find of the higheſt Character, as the *Religion of their Nation* by *Law to be eſtabliſhed*; to which they allow the encouragement of their *publick Honours* and *Maintanance*, and taken care for the propagation of it by Inſtructions, Arguments, Reaſons, and good Examples, they have done all that God expects from them to do, and ſo have *delivered their own ſouls.*

That which was of their free judgment and arbitrement, (as proper to them, as to families and perſons, to diſpoſe of their own) they have placed as they thought upon due conſideration, moſt to the *glory of God*, and the *good of the people*; but to deprive men of their *native rights*, or to puniſh them in their *Perſons* or *Eſtates* (who are not Offenders againſt *Natural Religion*) for the ſentiments of their minds, of which they have only a humane judgment, is not a Power wherewith they think themſelves inveſted of God, and ſo forbear it.

This is indeed the Religion of a *Nation* of *Men*, a *Nation of Chriſtians*, a *Vertuous*, an *Honourable Government*, and more hopeful to propagate true Chriſtianity, than that which writes its *Laws* in *Blood.* And this is to Rule *over men* and not over *Beaſts*; bound up (as men ſhould be) with the *cords of a man* in *Natural Religion*; in what is beyond that, as revealed from God, with Bands of Love, to ſerve the *Publick*; *Bleſſed are the people who are in ſuch a caſe*; *bleſſed is that people whoſe God is thus the Lord Jehovah.*

Object. 2. *What Peace can there be in the world amongſt private and particular perſons, while there are ſeveral opinions in Religion? how many Diſputes, and Calumnies, and Invectives are continually flying up and down by reaſon of differences in Religion? and how much better are all compelled into Union?*

Anſwer. All theſe evils are but ſo many Arguments of *depraved Nature*, which creates its own occaſions out of every thing; and if the miſchiefs of *Compulſion*, or the ill ſtate even of thoſe parts of the world, where the voice of Religion is all one language, were caſt up, I doubt they would be found to ballance the worſt that can be charged on *differences in Religion.* But yet *Natural Religion*, and moſt evidently *Chriſtian Religion*, is moſt ſevere and poſitive againſt all *Strife*, *Envy*, *Railings*, *evil Surmiſings*, and bends men upon *Peace*, *Love*, *Meekneſs*, *Quietneſs*, *Charity* towards all men, and eſpecially *Chriſtians*, as is after to be ſhewn; and therefore undoubtedly thoſe evil effects where they grow to exceſs, may be reſtrained by *Civil Magiſtracy*, as in any other caſe; and the rather, that True Religion ſo much diſowning them, they are more inexcuſable in that cauſe, than any other; for though we find Scripture ſevere in its language in great caſes, as St. *Paul* againſt the Bigots of the Law; yet we muſt alſo conſider the *Infallible Spirit* that guided *Sacred Writers*, who alone knows how to direct thoſe *ſharp arrows*, and what effect they ſhall take.

Object. 3. *This clips off the* Royalty *and* Prerogative *of* Princes, *if they have not the command of mens* Sentiments, *or at leaſt of their* outward Actions *and* Practiſes *in* Religion.

Anſ. The unjuſt *Enlargements* of *Earthly Power* into the *Divine Sanctuary*, hath been always *fatal to Princes. Uzziah's rude*

rude entrances into it, were puniſhed by *God* with *infamous Leproſy*: *Herods Letting that ſacrilegious acclamation, It is the voice of a God, not of a man*, ſink into him, was preſently reveng'd with *a dreadful hand of Judgment*. *Humane Power* is ſafeſt, keeping it ſelf within the *verge of Divine Inſtitution*; beyond that, though it may ſeem greater, yet it becomes only like a *ſwelling wall*, the bigger it is, the more ready to fall; or a *tottering Fence* expatiating to ruine. 1 Chron. 28, 18. 19. Act. 12. 22, 23.

Their Honour is great in being *nurſing-Fathers*; if *God* had intended *Civil Magiſtracy* to govern in any *Religion* but *Natural*, they ſhould have had as certain Rules to act by, as they have in Natural Religion.

Beſides what is the good of being *great Maſters* in *Religion*, except in that wherein *God hath ſhewed every man what is good*, ſeeing the *greater Judgment* waits for ſuch. Thus the Apoſtle *James*, James 3. 1. *My brethren, be not many maſters, impoſers or preſcribers* in Religion; that is, do not affect it, knowing we ſhall receive a *greater Judgment*.

Object. 4. *But it is impoſſible to govern with any ſecurity, if Governours hold not the* Reins of mens Conſciences, *if they have not the* Rule *of that* Helm, *that* turns about ſo great Bodies of people, *which way ſoever they that have that* Pylotry pleaſe, *with what vigor and courage are men animated while the Principles and Rewards of Religion are in their hearts and eyes? If therefore the Prince rules not in theſe, his* Command *is but* Cypher.

Anſwer 1. Religion is too great and *noble* a thing to be but an *Expedient* of *Government*.

2. The Hiſtory of Chriſtianity aſſures us no Princes have had more *obedient Subjects*, a more *valiant Souldiery*, than *Heathen Princes* of *Chriſtians*. *True Religion* knows its obligation to Government, and purſues the Laws of it, though that Government hath ſtood diſtinct from that

True Religion. And this is the ſtanding-Rule of Chriſtians.

Object. 5. But what *Tumults*, *Factions*, *Seditions*, have been rais'd under *Religious pretences*, when Subjects have not yielded themſelves to the *Empire* of *Princes* in *Religion?*

Anſw. Theſe evils, as they are falſely pretended by *men* of *turbulency* to be for the *ſervice of Religion*; ſo they are unjuſtly charg'd upon it. There can be therefore no ſeverity too great upon thoſe that ſo abuſe ſo excellent a thing. But the ſame care that ſecures againſt ambition, ſedition, rebellion, in one ſhape, will do it in another, without taking away lawful liberties. Nor is there any remedy ſo ſpecifick againſt the great *Hypocriſie* of *covering Rebellion with Religion*, *Faction with Faith*, as the ſevereſt Regiment of men according to the indiſputable Laws of *Natural Religion*, and allowance of the greateſt *Tolleration* in what no way contradicts that: For then is the *artifice* ſtrongeſt, when it is planted in the *oppreſſion* of *mens conſciences*, ſo great an *illegality* againſt *Natural Principles*. Take away ſevere Impoſitions, and what have ſuch *Politicians* to work upon?

Object. 6. *But what a* Hydra, *a many*-headed Monſter *of* Opinions, *will Religion become by ſuch a* Toleration?

Anſw. 1. *Severe Natural Religion* enforc'd, and ſtrictly purſued, will ſo *rebate* mens *corruptions*, (beſides the hopes and expectations of *Divine Bleſſing* accompanying ſo vertuous a Government), that there will be a much greater *retrenchment of Opinions*, than can be underſtood. The excellent *Wiſdom*, *Gravity* of *Natural Religion* in the *lives* and *actions* of men, eſpecially *enobled* with *Chriſtianity*, would bring moſt of men, except extremely bad or wild, into an admi-

admiration of its excellency, that even ingenuous ſhame, together with *general prudence*, would compoſe them againſt *fugitive*, *inconſtant*, *changeable*, *giddy opinion*. Men are not ſo intractable as they are thought to theſe *awful Laws*, if wiſely propos'd. The worſt and wildeſt part would become in every mans ſenſe *due ſubjects* for *rigor*, whom ſo much *reaſon* and *fair inducement* would not prevail upon.

Steelly, *unfruitful*, *unſatisfactory ceremonies*, *looſe principles* and practiſes, the want of that great *preſence* of *true Religion*, and an *iron hand* inſtead of it, makes men *Atheiſtick*, *Sceptick* and *Fanatick*, ever teeming into vain opinion, for want of ſolid goodneſs to reſt upon.

But however *ſinful degenerate* men will be bad every way: Uniformity begets *lothſome ignorance* and *formality*. That which is beſt in it ſelf is to be choſen, *viz.* That *free air* and *light*, in which men may *try all things*, and *hold faſt that which is good*, though evil adheres to that, as to all good things.

Argum. 5. To conclude, *True Natural Religion* hath a ſet of ſuch *ſelf-evident principles*, that it will be enough to name them; and yet if they were obſerv'd and obey'd, *univerſal peace* and *quietneſs* could not fail to reſult from them.

1. That every man hath the *due care* of his *ſoul* committed to himſelf, ſo that it ſhall be no *Apology* for him in the *ſight of God*, that others, whether *Churches*, *Magiſtrates*, or *publick Teachers* miſled him; it may be ſome *abatement* of *condemnation* to him, and *increaſe* to them; but *it ſhall not deliver him; he ſhall die in his ſin*, though *his blood ſhall be required at the watchmans hand.* Ezek. 3. 18.

What reaſon then can there be, or how can it be accounted for, to compel that man with force to take that way he judges dangerous, or drive him from what he thinks beſt for his ſoul? To adviſe, perſwade, reaſon him, is com-

commendable and charitable. It is good for him to make the best inquiry, and take the best advice. But that he should be forc'd against his own sense, is unnatural and barbarous, seeing *he must be wise for himself*; *or if he scorns, he alone must bear it.* This is to be understood in cases not evidently good or evil by Natures Laws. In them there is no excuse against impressions of absolute authority. Now how much would this tend to peace, if it had its due observance?

Prov. 9. 12.

2. That *Humane Nature* should do all the good, kindness, and ease it can to it self in every particular member, and remove all the evil, discomfort, and mischief it can in the same manner; and no severity, except in cases plainly destructive to general Humanity, can be tollerable to true Humanity: If this were mens Rule, who would *hurt* or *destroy* in the world?

3. That in all things, wherein a man can without infinite hazard do it, he should unite himself with the *greatest Communities*, with *lawful Governours*, with Nations, and most comprehensive Congregations of Christians; seeing that is most acceptable to God, who would have *all Nations to serve him*, all people to praise him: It is most *Humane* and *Christian*; it is also most a *mans interest*, most safe and secure to himself.

Rom. 15. 9, 10, 11.

4. That wherein a man finds himself *under a necessity* of *differing from any man*, much more from a *Community*, he should deport himself with all *meekness*, *humility*, *modesty*, *love* and *charity*, that he may demonstrate, it is truly his *judgment* and *sense of conscience*, and not *perverse humour*, that makes him differ; that he is still a most *lively feeling* member in the *body of mankind*, and Christians, that in all things *excepting the glory of God*, and the *salvation* of his *soul*, *interests* too vast to be *compounded* for, he prefers the publick before himself; such a *one* can neither *harm*, nor *deserve* to be *harmed*.

I have

I have now dispatch'd what I intend concerning this first *foundation* of even *Universal Peace* recommended by Christian Religion: *viz.* The *general unity* and *uniformity* there would be in *Natural Religion*, *if men would shew themselves men.* I will only by way of Conclusion reflect upon the *usefulness* of so great a *Point.*

1. It justifies the great Creator of *all*, who hath not *left himself without witness*, amidst this great *Deordination* of his *Rational creatures*, that he is yet a *Faithful Creator:* Seeing he hath *carv'd* into their very *Beings* such a *Law of Truth* and *Goodness*, that if they would *but shew themselves men*, would have preserv'd them from the great errors of *Underderstanding* and *Practise*; and as a Compass would steer them in the *wide and disorderly sea* wherein they now *sail.* By this inward *infallible guide*, if rightly excited to give its sense, and duly applied, they might find true Religion in *this Babel of Languages* concerning it. And though it is very difficult, and in the event, through mans great corruption, but not in the reason of things, almost impossible without *Divine Illumination* so to excite and apply it, yet there it is, even *within men*, so to be excited and applied; and it is mens *corruption* only, and *wickedness*, that it is not of *more use.*

2. To us *Christians* having the benefit of this *Divine Illumination* in the *Word of God*, and in the *hopeful assistances* of the *Holy Spirit*, the *use* of this *Natural Law* is much more visible; and indeed chiefly we have the benefit of it, and of such discourse as this upon it; and our *guilt* more than *twofold*, if we do not find it. To us it may appear how *inflexible a Rule* it is, how excellent the *Religion* of our *Saviour* is, we may in every thing see by it, what it is that is indeed of *value* among all our *divisions*; What is that *faith once delivered to the Saints*, we should be always in an *agony* for; and what we may allow and condescend to those various

various Sentiments, that are and will be as various, as *aſpect*; the *beauty* and even *harmony* of *Humanity* and *Chriſtianity* being not made up of *Uniformity* in ſuch things; but *unity* of *love* and *charity* is the true *beauty*, the *true melody* here; all would be a *dead calm* without ſome *variety*. Thus as Chriſtian Religion revives and now *impreſſes Natural Religion*, ſo does *Natural Religion corrected*, freed from its *Interpolations*, *corrupt Gloſſes*, reſtor'd and fill'd up, where *gaping chaſmes* had ſpoil'd the *ſenſe* and *contexture*, and anew *imprinted* upon us by Chriſtian Religion, give great light to Chriſtian Religion. For being thus reſtor'd, and a natural light within us, it is redintegrated to us in its great Office, to be as *the candle of the Lord* in our *ſpirits*, by which we behold the true and excelling *Glories of Chriſtianity*.

3. It therefore makes *brief* and *compendious* many great *Controverſies*; as they are made in Chriſtian Religion: I ſhall ſummarily inſtance in theſe Four.

1. Thoſe between *Rome* and the *Reformed Churches*. Although I have a *juſt value* for all thoſe *renowned labours* of the *great lights* God hath raiſed up in the *Proteſtancy*; a very rational and Chriſtian entertainment of the *Writer* and *Reader*: Yet I muſt profeſs the *unſhaken Aſſurance* I center upon, in all thoſe *Controverſies*, is a *ſhort Concluſion of the matter*, That *Romiſh Religion* not only *is not*, but *cannot be true*: it is *impoſſible it ſhould be of God*, if Scripture and our *Faculties* are true; if Natural Religion, or Chriſtian Religion that we have in the Scriptures be true: And this I take to be a *ready* and *ſure Antidote* againſt *Popery* to all that are equally concern'd to know which is the *True Religion*, *Catholick Religion falſly ſo called*, *Popiſh Religion*, or *Proteſtant Religion*, though they have not opportunity to acquaint themſelves with all the *Learning* ſo *plentiful*, ſo *valuable* at this day in the world for the *deciſion* between them.

2. That great Principle of *Natural Religion*, *Hear Oh Iſrael*

Israel, the Lord thy God is one Jehovah; and *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy might and strength.* And that great Principle of *Christian Religion, If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha*; these two joyned together assure me beyond doubt, *Our Mediator* upon whom our Love, Trust, Service is to rest; and that at such a distance as is Heaven from Earth, cannot be but the *One God with the Father*, and so I am resolved in the *Socinian* Controversie. And further, if he be the *Eternal Son of God*, and his *offering up the Humanity united to him, a sacrifice*, I know it must be of *infinite value*, and not a *martyrdom*, not an *example* only. Deut. 6. 4, 5. 1 Cor. 16. 22.

3. By *Natural* and *Christian Principles* united, I am convinc'd, the great foundations on which the Controversies between the *Arminian* and *Calviniſt* (as we use to express them) rest, must have great *truth on both sides*; but they being related to those *judgments of God*, that are as a *great depth*, it is impossible to find them out to *perfection*; for how can *Finite wade in Infinite*, without being *swallowed* by it! We need not therefore stay, till these two things can be reconcil'd in our Judgments, the *infinite soveraignty and dominion of the Almighty* over every *particular immortal spirit* that he hath made; so that it cannot be *dispos'd* of, or *dispose* it self without the *counsel* and *foreknowledg* of *God*; and yet that *no one* is *prejudg'd* by any *determination* of God in the *true liberty of a rational creature*, much less *determin'd* to *sin* and *misery* upon it, by any over-ruling power. We may safely with respects to both sides, be profoundly abased in the sense of *Incomprehensible soveraignty* over us; in a self-condemnation, wherein soever we find our selves *degenerate* and *fallen* into *sin*, *as knowing our destruction of our selves.* Nor need we stay till *supreme grace* and our *own free-will* are *reconcil'd* in *dispute*; we may safely on both sides make our *humblest* and most *lowly appeals* to him, *that work-*

Phil. 2: 13. Ezek. 18. 32. Phil. 2. 12. *eth in us both to will and to do.* We must do so, and are under the same security, and obligation in *stirring* up our *utmost powers* in *turning our selves that we may live*; *in working out our salvation with fear and trembling.* And all beyond these *two conclusions* are but Speculation; in which we may imploy and entertain our selves in *considering infinite wisdom*, and *glory*, and *searching* as near as we *dare approve its holy and gracious ways*; but need not be angry we can't agree in things *out of our depth*, so as to be certain.

4. In all the Disputes concerning *Forms* of *Church-Government*, *Modes of Worship*, we have thus much of resolution from the consent of *Christian* with *Natural Religion*; Whatever is most substantially good, is fittest to be the *center of Agreement and Union*; and other things doubtful allowed to particular *reason*, and *choice*, with mutual *tolleration* and *charity*. As is further to be shewn us under the next Head of Discourse.

Having now spoken so much of *Natural Religion*, I think it necessary, before I quite leave it, besides the survey I have taken of it, to add these Characters concerning it, that it may not possibly be mistaken.

1. It is that which depends upon nothing particular, but must be the same to all Nations, and times; it is all *essence*, and hath no *accidents*, or *circumstances*, as it is *natural*. To pray is *Natural Religion*, that is, to lift up Desires to God with *humility* and *hope*; this is and must be the same without any variation to every man in the world. Now whatever can be suppos'd to pertain to it, if it be not the same every where, is not *Natural Religion*.

There can be but *one notion* of a *God* to all the world; there can be but *one Justice*, *Sobriety* throughout; there can be but *one notion of sin*, or of the *pardon of it*; of *Judgment to come*, as they are natural. Till you come to *Essence*, you come not to *Natural Religion*.

2. It

2. It is that which *cannot be demurr'd to*, but with the *failure* of all *ſober reaſon*, nor indeed without a *conſciouſneſs* of it, while denied. I am fully aſſured no man can deny a *God*, a *diſtinction between good and evil*, a *future ſtate*, without a ſtrong *recoil* of the *Natural Faculties*, returning as by an *Intellectual*, *Moral*, *Elaſtick* force.

3. It is that whereof, if any of the Principles be taken away, *grand inconveniencies* and *abſurdities* will follow, like taking away *light*, *air*, or *water*, out of the *natural world*.

What an infinite neceſſity is there of God? of Prayer to him? of Praiſes of him? of his pardoning-mercy ſince ſin? of Judgment to come? Take away theſe, and *univerſal nature* flys in pieces, runs every way upon ſo *great a vacuum*, as the *want* of any theſe *Principles* immediately makes.

This is *Natural Religion*; and nothing elſe is *Natural Religion* but this.

Having diſcours'd what a foundation of *Univerſal Peace Chriſtian Religion* hath laid, in not only aſſuming to, but uniting with it ſelf *Natural Religion*; I ſhall come now to preſent as in perſpective, *Chriſtian Religion* it ſelf, and ſhew the admirable contrivances for unity, peace, and love, it hath found out; and moſt earneſtly preſt on all its Diſciples, ſo infinitely wiſe, reaſonable and good, ſo efficaciouſly inſinuated, ſo ſtrongly argued and enforc'd, ſo awfully commanded, ſo to the *life*, the very *Divine life* of it, even *Hypoſtatiz'd* in our Lord; that it is indeed the inexpiable ſhame and guilt of the Chriſtian world, that it is ſo unlike the *Divine Philoſophy*, the *Laws*, the *grand Exemplar* of it.

That I may purſue this Intention with greateſt advantage, I ſhall propoſe under ſeveral Heads, how this deſign is laid by the infinite wiſdom of our *Saviour*; much different from what is ready on all occaſions to offer it ſelf to *Humane*

Imagination, that is *Unity* in *Uniformity*; without which, as this confident boaſt of *Imaginary Reaſon* pretends, there can be no peace, and that this is the ground-work of all; but the more *Heavenly Underſtanding* of the *Holy Spirit* lays its *foundations* quite otherwiſe, as ſhall be made manifeſt in theſe following accounts.

1. *The firſt foundation Chriſtianity lays, is this, It propoſes to the minds and conſciences of all its ſervants, Concerns of that vaſt moment and Rules of Action according to them*; that whoever does ſincerely obſerve, and walk by them, ſhall be unavoidably carried *upon love, and peace*, and *off from diviſion*. It does not propoſe a *ſett of opinions*, that every one muſt come up to, though at a diſtance from theſe main concern; or a *machine* of *bodily worſhip*, that every one muſt learn the motions of; but it ſets down *intereſts* of ſuch *indiſputable*, *worth* and *goodneſs* to be purſued, that do upon very great reaſons concenter Chriſtians in *unity*, *love* and *peace*.

1. In that the ſpirits of men poſſeſs'd with them, are wiſe,
1 Cor. 14.20. weighty, generous, and manly: *In malice, children*; *in underſtanding men*; that they can neither grow fierce, churliſh, and rigid, nor weakly, peeviſh, and querulous. Nay very much above this, their ſouls are holy, heavenly, aſpiring to God and Chriſt, that they are above ſmall things.

It is of great conſequence, what notions in Religion and Divine Things the mind feeds upon; for accordingly their temper will be. They that have with devotion faln upon old *Jejune obſervances*, (which they call Reverence of Antiqui-
Phil. 1. 9, 10. ty) *ſpinoſe* Controverſies, opinions of *zeal without knowledg*, a paſſionate affectionate Religion, *not abounding in all judgment*, and knowing *the things that differ*: Their temper is apt to be moroſe and angry, or vexatious and full of complaint, if all be *not of their meaſure*; but they that have

have their thoughts fixed on *righteouſneſs, peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, they are furniſhed with what is of value, they partake of the *marrow*, and *fatneſs of Gods houſe, they drink of the river of his pleaſures*; and are lightſome, benign, altogether for compaſſion, beneficence, and rejoicing in univerſal good. Pſal. 36. 8.

2. The purſuit of thoſe Intereſts gives them ſuch true employment, that they are not at leiſure to preſs trifles upon others, or be over-attendant to them themſelves. They that are *running this race, run ſo, that they may obtain*; they that are *fighting for this Crown do not love to beat the air*; they that are *preſſing on for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt*, are ſo taken up, all their ſinews are ſo ſtrain'd another way, that they cannot trifle themſelves, put others upon it, nor aſſume any thing in compariſon of what they are ſo intended upon. 1 Cor. 9. 24. Phil. 3: 14.

3. That high value they have for the *one thing neceſſary*, gives ſuch an honourable character to all that are in the ſame manner affected, and imployed, that they cannot differ one with another in affection upon minute things. The regard, and reverence they have for that Divine Image upon them, preſerves them from lightly ſpeaking or thinking ill one of another.

Now in theſe three things, to have Spirits of an Excellent, Solid, Benign Temper, attending great and worthy Objects; in having a full, generous and noble Employment, in a great and honourable Eſteem of Chriſtians, for true Chriſtianities ſake, lye the true ſeeds of Chriſtian Peace.

I ſhall therefore bring theſe things to to their juſt Goſpel-Rule, as in innumerable expreſſions of Scripture it is ſilently pointed at; but in two more expreſly, and in both, as the very ſtandard of Peace.

The

The First is that which hath fallen lately under so much
Phil. 3. 15, 16. debate: *let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

Now that we may understand this rule, let me propose this very plain and easie Method into the *Apostles* sense.

Ver. 1, &c. The *Apostle* beginning this Chapter with an exhortation to *rejoice in* God, and in that *excellent state of Christianity* into which they were brought, immediately had his eye upon the *Legalists*, that *troubled those clear waters*, and damp'd the joy of Christians; a point he was much upon, and very safe for them often to hear. Having, as I said, his eye upon those *Legalists*, who indeed perverted the Gospel, and encountred the main design of it, (as he by the *Apostolick Spirit* discerningly knew) He cautions Christians against them, under very black Characters;
Ver. 2. *dogs*, of rabid and rending spirits; *evil workers*, designing against the good the Gospel introduc'd, disguising themselves under the venerable name of the *circumcision*, when they were quite another thing, *viz. the concision*, a Sect in whom the dignity either of *true Israelitism*, or *Christianity* was præscinded from themselves, as infamously as the *Garments* and *Beards* of *David*'s *Messengers* were by *Hanuns Villany.*

Ver. 3. Therefore saith the Apostle, you need not fear they are gone away with the *birthright* and *blessing* of *Circumcision:* We are the *true Circumcision*, the *Israel of God*, who having forsaken the *flesh*, the outward Ordinances of *Jewism*, out of which the sprightly inhabitant is departed, and left it as a *body dead*; we, saith he, *worship God in the spirit*;
Ver. 4. that Spirit is with us, we *Glory in Christ*; we have the true Joy not allayed, chastised or adulterate; *we have no confidence in the flesh.*

From hence the Apostle passes on, and in a *Figure* proposes in himself the best and fairest side of the legal state, as it then stood out of Christ, that he might at that very best,

beſt, trample upon it, and debaſe it to the very loweſt in compare with Chriſt; *circumciſed the eight day, of the ſtock of Iſrael, an Hebrew of Hebrews*, &c. *touching the righteouſneſs of the law blameleſs: but what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt; yea doubtleſs I count All things, &c.* Ver. 7.

Wherein he appears (as in a moſt lively ſcheme), *Firſt*, A *Jew* of the greateſt advantages without Chriſt, and yet worth nothing. Then a *Chriſtian* enrich'd as a *Merchant* with the *Pearl of great price*: in himſelf, I ſay, appears a *Jew* of the higheſt alloy; in himſelf a *Chriſtian* of the *firſt three*; in both he ſhews the worthleſneſs of *all out of Chriſt*, the infinite Riches to be *found in Chriſt*. And after this he exemplifies ſtill in himſelf the high and moſt important buſineſs of a *Chriſtian* in all thoſe moſt Eloquent, Significant and Ponderous Expreſſions, that I cannot ſo much as glance upon, being too mighty for a long and ſet diſcourſe, much more for a ſhort one, and in paſſage. Ver. 8, 9. Ver. 10.

Having done all this, he now applies it to the preſent caſe of Chriſtians, whom he ranks into two degrees. Ver. 15, 16.

1. The Τέλειοι, *the perfect*, *thoſe of full age*, as they are call'd, *Heb.* 5. *ult.* or τέλειος ανηρ, as *Epheſ.* 4. 13. the *perfect full ag'd man*, grown wholly out of the *childiſhneſs* of *Ceremonies*, or *Opinions*.

2. The weaker Chriſtians, whom the Apoſtle very gently and tacitely ſignifies, by thoſe that do τι ἑτέρως φρονεῖν, thoſe that are under ſome abatement from this perfection of judgment, they have ſomewhat of reverence for thoſe Rites formerly of Divine Appointment, though they ſincerely too *value Chriſt* above all, *even as the perfect*.

To the Firſt the Apoſtle adviſes, *Let us wholly and intirely mind the ſame thing*; ſo many of us as are perfect, we have nothing elſe to do, we have nothing in the leaſt to take us off.

To

To the Second he allows, First, All the *Tolleration* of *Charity*, till, and confidently foretells, *God will reveal even this to them*, viz. not only the ſupreme excellency of Chriſtianity, but the total *uſeleſneſs*, and *utter abolition* of thoſe Ceremonies.

But in the Second place he preſſes them on ſo far as they had attained, *viz.* to a ſenſe of the *incomparable excellency* of *the knowledg of Chriſt*, *to a conformity in his Death and Reſurrection*; and that they would *walk by that one Rule*, that they would adjuſt all their Actions and Motions with the *perfect Chriſtian*, and mind that ſame thing, though they cannot lay aſide all regard to other things immediately of that lower Rate.

Here then is the Chriſtians Rule of governing himſelf as a Chriſtian, and it brings forth certain Peace.

1. The *abſolute* and *inexceptionable Rule* to every one; that is a True Chriſtian, to have a ſupreme value for the *eminency of the knowledg of Chriſt*, *to know him and the power of his Reſurrection*, *and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings*, *to be made conformable to his Death*, *to forget things behind*, *and to preſs forward for the prize.*

If any man hath not *attained this Rule*, he is either no Chriſtian, or under the diſguiſe of one, (if he be an *Undertaker*, an *Impoſer*, a *Maſter in Chriſtianity*,) ſuch as the Apoſtle here ſo dreadfully brands; an *evil worker*, a *deſigner againſt Chriſt.*

Here is the one *ſame Rule* by which all Chriſtians are to walk: here is the *one thing* they are all to *mind.* Here is no allowance, no tolleration, here it is they are all to be ſo ſerious, of ſuch excellent Spirits, to have ſuch a value one of another, as to be able to center in Univerſal *Love* and *Peace* upon this point.

2. Every *perfect man* is not to take in any thing of a lower kind, of a forreign extract, into ſo Divine and Heavenly

venly a Religion, that he may wholly and without any allocation to any thing elſe, mind this *ſame thing:* This makes him a more wiſe, a more perfect, manly and *full ag'd Chriſtian*; more Spiritual and Divine, and more fitted to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.*

The overowning any way, party, or perſon, takes off ſo from the Excellency of a *Chriſtian*, as to render him *Carnal* and *Childiſh:* I could not (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *ſpeak to you, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Chriſt*; you are ſo over-zealous for men, and make *Chriſt* himſelf as if he were but the *Head of a Party.* 1 Cor. 1. 12.

And this brings forth *Striſe, Envy*, aud *Diviſion*, as he tells thoſe *Corinths*, 1 Cor. 3. 1.

3. If any man be under ſuch diſadvantage as to have taken ſuch *aſſumenta*, ſuch *additionals* to his *Chriſtianity*, he being right in the main Rule of the ſupreme value of Chriſt in *his Death*, and *Reſurrection:* he is to be *ſupported in his infirmity* by all the kindneſs, and condeſcenſion of ſtronger Chriſtians, in expectation of Gods *timely Revelation*; but ſo as to be preſs'd on to walk up, and bear aloft to that *Rule* whereunto he hath *attained*, to *mind that one thing*; and ſo to wear out that miſtaken eſteem for any thing not deſerving it. Rom. 15. 1.

And this is moſt neceſſary in order to Peace, ſeeing ſuch infirmities are natural to this low ſtate, *even of Chriſtians* in this world.

Wherein they that are ſcrupulous, muſt take heed of judging the wiſer, as diſorderly, irregular, and almoſt prophane, if they do not obſerve their Rites; and the ſtronger ought as carefully to preſerve themſelves from deſpiſing the ſcrupulous, as *fond ſuperſtitioniſts*, becauſe they can't neglect them. So the Apoſtle diſcourſes, *Rom.* 14.

Yet ſo, that theſe *ſomewhat otherwiſe minded*, be of the ſame mind, and rule in the main; elſe they can neither *have*

peace in themſelves, nor yeild it to the *higher Chriſtians*; nor grow up to the *ſtature of full ag'd men in Chriſt.*

This alſo is to be added as obſervable, that the caſe of the weakneſs of the firſt Chriſtians can never recur exactly; for thoſe Ceremonies being of *Divine Inſtitution*, had juſt claim to an awe upon Conſciences, not as yet clear in their repeal; whereas all later Rites can pretend no higher than humane inſtitution, cuſtome, or venerable antiquity; for the ſuſpition of *Apoſtolick Inſtitution* in their behalf, and ſo adding Religion to them, I look upon as much weaker and worſe, ſeeing we have no Authentick Records of ſuch Inſtitutions; and in things of ſo dilute a goodneſs, as Ceremonies muſt be, there will not be a ballance to the oppoſite danger of leaning a Religious weight upon a *broken Reed*, that both *pierces*, and *deceives*.

But it may be ſaid, Is not the ſcrupulous forbearing, the being ſcar'd and terrified at Ceremonies, as great a weakneſs, as being over anxions in their obſervation?

Does not the placing a point of Religion in an abhorrence of them, and thinking *ones ſelf the better* for not uſing them, detract as much from minding this ſame thing, and walking by the ſame Rule, as the other ſide ſolicitude?

No doubt it does, if we juſtly explain and limit in the caſe; and therefore for the reſolving this queſtion, I will obſerve the importance of this ſame *Rule*, given us by the Apoſtle in another of his Epiſtles, a place very parallel to the ſenſe, and much of the ſame expreſſion with this to the *Philippians*, the right explication of which will alſo much confirm the expoſition given of *this Rule*, ſeeing as I ſaid, they are both one and the *ſame Rule*: and it is that we find, *Gal.* 6. 14, 15, 16.

God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.

For in Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion availeth any thing,

nor

nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.

Here is the Joy and Glory of *Chriſtianity* in the Doctrine of *Chriſt* dying for ſinners, and bringing in that *Divineſt Religion* upon it: here is a *conformity to his Death* by which all worldly, ſenſual, and fleſhly Glory, whether in fleſhly Religion, or fleſhly Life (which miniſter one to another) is *crucifyed* to a *Chriſtian*, and he to it.

But moſt eſpecially the *Apoſtle* levels here againſt a *fleſhly Religion*, obſerving the enemies of Chriſtianity ſo active inſtead of a *new creature*, to delight to *glory in the fleſh*, in the outward conformity of their *Proſelytes*. He obſerved the great Bait of Ceremonial Religion, was εὐπροσωπῆσαι to *ſet a good face* on things how mean ſovever; as idolaters carve and guild a Poſt: *Glory in appearance*, though without true ſatiſaction to the *heart* or *conſcience*, makes *Spiritual Religion* look like *nothing*; but to the true Chriſtian who knows the Goſpel ſo Divine and Spiritual a thing, a *fleſhly Religion* is out of date.

A *new Creation* in the ſoul of a *Chriſtian*, and that exemplified in a life of excellent Holineſs, ſubſtantial Goodneſs and Purity, planted in the *Faith of Chriſt Jeſus*, is of the only avail in this Profeſſion; and he that makes *Circumciſion any thing* ſeparated from this; or if he ſhall fly over to the other extream, to make *any thing* of *Uncircumciſion*, as if they might attone for the want of a *new creature*, as a more perfect remove from *Judaiſm*, and conſigning a mans ſelf over to *Chriſtianity*; both are alike miſtaken in the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, who values only this *new creature*.

And as many as walk by this rule; viz. a making the *new creature in Chriſt*, All; and every thing elſe Nothing: and who act according to it, *the peace and mercy of God*, and *Chriſt*, and all *true Chriſtians*, be upon them; for they are the *true Iſrael of God*.

And ſo it is plain, If any man makes the other ſide of a *Ceremony*, the not obſerving it, a point of Real, Subſtantial Religion to him, is afraid of it, and values that *fear* as a *fear of God*, without the more intrinſick parts and effects of that Fear, he errs from Chriſtianity, as the Bigot for Ceremonies does.

But this does not imply, every one that preſerves, and will not recede from his liberty, though he knows the *true uſe* and *diſuſe* of *all things indifferent*, yet will not be ceremonially bound by any on earth, is preſently afraid of a Ceremony, or that he is ſo, becauſe he will not ſet it too near Divine Inſtitutions in his practiſe, or incumber his worſhip of God with it, though it be told him never ſo often; There is no Religion in the Impoſition, but Order, Decency, or Submiſſion to Government.

All this does not argue, he makes it a point of Subſtantial Religion not to endure Ceremonies, which he eſteems himſelf *neither the better*, nor *the worſe*; but places all in *Chriſt*, and the *New Creature*, *to commend him to God.*

Thus we have the Firſt, and very Deepeſt Foundation for True Chriſtian Peace, lying in the abſolute ſubſtantialneſs of the Religion of *Jeſus Chriſt*; ſubſtantially good, even as the *Eternal Laws of Goodneſs*, and perfecting the ſoul of man into them, and the enjoyment of God in them; and the Heart, and Life ſtretched out in the utmoſt purſuit, with the ſame intenſneſs, that men *ſtrive for maſteries*, and taking nothing ceremonial into any degree of this value, if into any at all, as *the full-grown Chriſtian* does not. This is the *True Rule of Chriſtianity.*

And *this Rule*, even as to that to the *Galatians* and to the *Philippians*, *is one and the ſame Rule*, and given into every Chriſtians hand to judg and walk by, with this Inſcription upon it, *Whoever lives and acts by this ſame Rule*, though he may require toleration in ſome things that God may in *time reveal to him*; yet he is, together with all Chriſtians,

ſtians, the *Iſrael of God*; built *as a City compact together, at unity and at peace with it ſelf.*

And who that looks upon *Chriſtianity*, and this *Rule of it*, can but be amaz'd, *Eſſential Chriſtianity* ſhould not draw up the intire Love and Zeal of Chriſtians to it, ſo that they ſhould only provoke one another *to love and good works*, and ſo value one another in it, as to be united and reconciled above and beyond all other *Bitterneſs.*

Now this firſt Head I have been inſiſting upon, is that in which Chriſtians have all *one judgment*, and *ſpeak* one *and the ſame thing*, and ſo admits not the leaſt variation. Here all the lines of *Chriſtian Revealed Religion* meet, no Fundamental point that is not included in this Rule.

For He to *whoſe Image* there muſt be ſuch a *conformity*, muſt be the *Son of God*; He that was *crucified* muſt be *man.* All purity from ſin, and vigor of the Divine Life, muſt be found where there is the *power of his death* and *reſurrection.* The *whole glory* of *ſelf-confidence*, *ſelf-righteouſneſs*, *worldly pomp and vanity*, muſt be *crucified*, where there is *the fellowſhip of his ſufferings*; where *the glory is only in his croſs*; where *the world is crucified to a man*, and *a man to the world*; where there is a reaching forth to the utmoſt, to attain *the reſurrection of the dead*, and a *preſſing forward for the price of the high calling of God in Jeſus Chriſt*, there muſt be the Doctrine of *Eternal life*; in *his reſurrection* lye treaſured *all the glories of the future ſtate*; and where theſe things are urg'd as under ſo great neceſſity, there muſt be an extremity of evils on the other ſide, ſignifying the *wrath to come.* They then that are agreed here, may well tolerate one another in leſſer differences, while theſe things are not ſubverted, over-preſſed, or defeated by other additions. This then may well be accounted the firſt ground of peace, *ſo great a Doctrine, that is according to Godlineſs.* Tit. 1. 1.

2. The

2. The ſecond Head under which may be diſcourſed the Efficacy of *True Chriſtian Religion* to Peace, is, That in Chriſtianity there is an *uniting ſpirit of Love*, flowing from thoſe ſeveral points of Union, wherein Chriſtians are cloſely one with another conjoyned, and compacted, and ſo acquieſce in a truly Divine Peace.

For the principal, internal tye of Union is, *that one ſpirit:* this one ſpirit conveys it ſelf, and runs through the whole body of all Chriſtians, *in Love, and ſo in Peace.*

For Love is the Bond of *Perfectneſs*, that is, of the *in-*
Col. 3. 14. *tegrity of this whole body:* for ſo I ſhould chooſe to expound *that Perfectneſs*, becauſe the Apoſtle had been exhorting to all thoſe Graces that do moſt conſerve the Union of the body; *bowels of Mercy, Goodneſs, Humbleneſs,*
v. 13. *Meekneſs, Patience, forbearance one of another, forgiveneſs one of another; if any one have a quarrel againſt another, even as Chriſt forgave: but above all* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *put on Love which is the bond of perfectneſs; and let the Peace of God rule in your hearts, unto which ye are called in one body:* So here is the Love that is the *Bond* of the *Integrity* of the *body*; and the *Peace* conſequent upon it, unto which *Chriſtians are called in one body*; and both of them guarded with all thoſe uniting, healing Vertues of Chriſtianity, wherein that Love and Peace are moſt cheriſh'd, conſerv'd and ſecur'd. Peace it ſelf is the *Bond of that Unity of the Spirit*, that is, of that real effective Union the Spirit accompliſhes, by vertue of which the parts all reſt in ſtrict combination one with nother: this Peace is the cloſe reſt of the parts, by which every one adheres with greateſt kindneſs to each other, and deſire of ſelf-preſervation in the preſervation of the whole; and ſo all the parts ſeek the commodious ſituation each of other, and abhor the diſturbance, the diſeaſe of any.

And becauſe this Peace cannot procure or conſerve it ſelf, ſeeing it is not a dull ſluggiſh Reſt, but in the midſt of Mo-

Motion and Action, Love is (as I may call it) the Divine *Archeus*, that Divine *Spirit* of *Nature*, the great Inſtrument of the *Holy Spirit*, the ſupreme Author of *this Love* and *Peace*.

And Love runs every way, pries into all the cauſes of Diviſion, and removes them, ſees into all the ways of conciliating, and effectually purſues them.

This is that Love, that edifies the body, it takes off all the aſperities and roughneſs of the parts, thoſe particular ſharp angularities of Opinion, reduces them to a ſquare, to a Figure fitted one to another, and then cements, and ties them one to another, till they grow *into a ſpiritual Temple*. What incomparable Virtues to this purpoſe, does the Apoſtle at large, and with greateſt ſpeciality, expreſs in that Divine Treatiſe of Love, 1 Cor. 13. *All knowledg without this is nothing*, of what ſort ſoever it be: That only *puffs up and ſwells men*, as if they themſelves were All, as if they could themſelves be an Intire Temple, a Spiritual Building alone; the *underſtanding all Myſteries*, it makes a man look to himſelf like the *whole Body of Chriſt*, or at leaſt, as if he were to determine the poſture, and figure of the whole, and all the other parts to obey, and be contented with the room he leaves. We know this is the general temper of Opinion, the product of *Knowledg* without *Love*. Knowledg therefore alone cannot build. Airy Knowledg is big, boiſterous, angry, if it be not admir'd, if it be not venerated ſo, as to take up what ſpace it pleaſes, to order as it pleaſes. 1 Cor. 8. 1.

Even the *following of the Truth*, the earneſt ſearch after, and purſuit of what is True, a much more excellent thing than meer Knowledg; yet if this be not in *love*, there cannot be a *growing up into the Head in all things, even Chriſt*. Eph. 4. 15.

Love then, is that which takes care of all the members, of all the *lively ſtones*, how they may all moſt comply with, and advance each other, and reſt in their peaceable conformity

one

one with another, and ſweeteſt application one to another, even while they are in a moſt intenſe, Chriſtian motion, like the Heavenly bodies, ſo harmonious, ſo at peace in all their activity, that there is in this true ſenſe, *The ſweet muſick of the ſpheres:* ſo it ſhould be, ſo it is in true Chriſtianity, in all its motions govern'd *by love*, how various ſoever in other reſpects, yet they are all melodious, becauſe they are all in peace, how different in leſſer things ſoever.

Now this *Love* and *Peace* are ſpiritual, and intellectual, and they therefore are fix'd upon a complication of *ſpiritual intellectual Centers* (if I may ſo expreſs them) all the Right True Lines from which, and returns to which, are in *Love and Peace.* And theſe are thoſe ſeveral points of union the Apoſtle hath laid together, Epheſ. 4. 4, 5, 6. *There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God, and Father of All, who is above All, and through All, and in you All.*

1. *One Body*] Even the whole Society of Chriſtians, diſperſed throughout all the world, and united ſo, as to make up this one Body, and that by virtue of the ſecond point of union, that follows.

2. *One Spirit*] *One Divine Spirit*, Author of the ſame Spirit of Holineſs and Grace within Chriſtians, informing every Chriſtian, and making them All of the *ſame Chriſtianity*, as the ſoul in men makes them *All of the ſame Rationality.*

This is the *one Spirit* into which *All are made to drink*, and ſo are *this one body*; for without this they would be indeed but as ſo many ſingle ſtones, or ſcattered parts; elſe too their union were no other than dull, and ſtupid; but now all the parts feel throughout in this *Center of one Spirit.*

3. *One Hope of our Calling*] The ſame Heaven and Eternal

ternal Happineſs (*Manſions of this ſame Houſe of our Father*) is the *one hope* of Chriſtians, unto which the Goſpel alike calls them. They then who are to meet together in the ſame Eternal Bleſſedneſs, and to be *one general Aſſembly*, and *Church of the firſt born for ever*, with what unconcernedneſs in little trifles ſhould they aſpire to that Glory together, with unexpreſſible indearedneſs of *Love* and *Peace?*

4. *One Lord*], even Jeſus Chriſt, inſtead of the *Lords* many, is the *One Lord* to Chriſtians, *by whom are all things,* Rom. 11. 18. *and they by him:* they therefore who ſubſiſt, and are borne upon the *Root*, as *branches of the one Vine*, muſt not *boaſt* 1 Cor. 8. 6. *againſt the Branches, for they bear not the Root, but the Root them:* the worſhipping of one *True Supreme Lord*, how 1 Cor. 8. 6. much a ſtronger tye of Union than a *precarious viſible*, but *viſible Apoſtate head?* If one Earthly Prince be ſuch a band of Union, how much more *one King of kings and Lord of lords?* they are to be forgiven every thing, conceded every thing, who ſincerely worſhip *this one Lord*: every thing that can poſſibly conſiſt with their ſincere acknowledgment of him.

5. *One Faith*], the Principles of *Revealed Religion*, which they believe, even the ſubſtantial Principles, (as I nam'd them in the laſt Head) are one and the ſame; and therefore a ſolid band of Agreement: and it is the ſame *Living*, and like *Precious*, *Saving Act of their Souls*, where- 2 Pet. 1. 1. with they believe *theſe alike Precious Principles*; *Faith that worketh by Love*, *Love to God*, and Love to all Chriſtians: Gal. 5. 6. Love is the very *natural Breath of that life of Faith.*

6. *One Baptiſm*], *One open Profeſſion and Confeſſion of Faith* Chriſtians make to *Salvation*, *with one Mind* and *one Mouth*, from under one end of Heaven to the other, generally ſeal'd with the ſame Sacramental Rites, *Baptiſm* comprehending all the inſtituted Rites of Chriſtianity: a voice

of Confeſſion as the voice of *Thunder*, ſo high as to ſtill and quiet all the ſmall murmurs and jars of Diviſion: Rites ſo ſolemn and great, as to make void and vain all other Ceremonies, as notes of Diſtinction.

1 Cor. 8. 6. 7. One God and Father of All, who is *above All, through All, in you All*]. To *us Chriſtians there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.*

This grand Uniting Principle of *Natural Religion* is more nearly condeſcended to us in Chriſtianity; and the Bounties of the Creator, in and through the Redeemer, flow with an Infinite Redundancy *in*, and *through*, and *over All*, with one *Univerſal Influence* comprehending, and folding all that are in the *Faith*, and *Acknowledgment* of the *One Author*, ſo cloſe by the ſameneſs of the influence, and as it were by the ſtrength of the ſtream, and this on every ſide circumfluence of it, *in*, and *through*, and *over All*, that they cannot diſunite.

Now from all theſe ſprings, *this Love*, *this Peace*, *a Love* that is an infallible character, that we are the *ſons of God*, 1 Joh. 3. 14. that we have paſſed from *Death to Life*, becauſe the Principle is ſo Divine, the Temper ſo Heavenly, and the laſt perfection of it, Eternal Glory; for Love never fails, but Phil. 4. 7. is ſwallowed up in that, *and abides for ever.* A *Peace* that ſo *garriſons the mind* in *the Knowledg and Love of* God in Chriſt, from which it cannot ſo divert and *wander*, being *kept* as within *Fortifications*, as to fall into ill tempered, unpeaceable Diviſion; a Peace *ſo paſſing Underderſtanding*, that it drinks up, and loſes all ſmall *dividing Opinions.*

Here then is the *Bond* of *Integrity*, or *perfectneſs* of the *Body of Chriſtians.* Hereby they are all at Peace, not ſtaying till they are all of one ſentiment in all things, that concern them toward God; but in thoſe *Fundamental points*, in thoſe *grand points of union*, they are fully ſatisfied, and at peace, and intirely love and unite; ſtrongly cemented and *edified in love*, as the number of the parts encreaſe, as the largeneſs

largeneſs of each part is dilated; ſo *they grow up into the Head*, and the *whole increaſe is made in love.*

It is not in pomp of Speculation and opinion always diſputations, and quarrelſome if *without love*, but *a worthy abounding of love* in all *knowledg* and *judgment*, ſo as not to be a Blind, Ignorant, Dull Affection.

Not in Models, or Forms, Rites or Ceremonies, of no value in this *ſpiritual frame*, when once they get paſt natural Order and Decency; but like nice Curioſities of Art, very often is all broken in pieces, in the twiſting things to comply with it; and when it is brought to paſs, rather Fine than Solid, and of no Duration.

Without forc'd Subſcriptions (prudential enough upon voluntary Agreements), but when impos'd with Rigor, they either receive into the Fold (beſides the Politick, Imperious Contrivers only) the Ignorant Herd, or the Hypocritical Complier with All things for his own Intereſt, and put out too often the moſt Intelligent, and Conſcientious.

Here then is the Juſt Eſtimate of *Hereſie* and *Schiſm*, in their True and Higheſt ſenſe; there may be a laxer and more general uſe of them to a lower ſenſe, but as to what we are now ſpeaking of.

Hereſy is the rending a man's ſelf off from the body of Chriſtians, by denying ſome of thoſe points of Conſent, in which the union of Chriſtians is founded; ſo that ſuch a Denial continued in after a *firſt* and *ſecond Admonition*, in ſo plain and evident points of Chriſtian union, argue a man *ſubverted from the foundation, ſinning with a high hand, condemned by himſelf* out of this *one Body*, or by the *Thing it ſelf*; and therefore is juſtly *rejected from the Communion of Chriſtians.* Titus. 3. 10, 11.

Or if by coyning and forming ſuch Additional points of Union, of ſuch an aliene and ſtrange Extract and Importance, compar'd with the True ones, as though they take in

them too, yet do virtually deſtroy ſome or more of them, This alſo *ſubverts the Heretick from the Foundation.*

Or if a Community of Chriſtians in Name, becauſe they retain the Acknowledgment of *Jeſus Chriſt the Lord*, ſhall frame to themſelves a diſtinct Body, united and compacted of ſuch Principles, as they have made eſſential to themſelves, that do either deny or defeat thoſe with which *Chriſt hath united his Body*, and ſo muſt needs alſo be animated with *another ſpirit*; This is, and muſt be a *diſtinct Body from this Body of Chriſt*, of which we now ſpeak.

But *Schiſm* is, when upon ſome points true or miſtaken, of Doctrine, or Worſhip, or External practice therein, that we would engage upon others, or others would oblige us upon, that do yet on neither ſide ſo entrench or regrate upon thoſe points of Union now mentioned, we notwithſtanding not only avowedly refuſe compliance with things required, or abate not from our demands of compliance with our ſelves, neither of which do neceſſarily infer *Schiſm*; but alſo withdraw that *Love and Sympathy, that fellow-feeling*, and adherence to the *body of Chriſt* in general, or to any part of it, for cauſes not deſerving. This is *Schiſm.*

Hereſy then does indeed make and conſtitute another, a *diſtinct body from the body of Chriſt*, by the principles united in, very different from, and deſtructive of the points of *Chriſtian Union*; and ſo ſeparates from, and gives alſo the *True body of Chriſt* a juſt reaſon to ſeparate it ſelf from thoſe, that by their Fundamental Errors do really become *another Body* from the *Body of Chriſt*, and ſo that compaſſion *as being in the ſame body*, is not due to them; only that of common Humanity is due to them.

Schiſm is a withdrawing that *love*, *care*, and *concern for the Body of Chriſt*, due to it, upon unjuſt Motives and Reaſons, becauſe of which we think it not the *Body of Chriſt*, when indeed it is.

Hereſy

Hereſy does not only, not love the *True Body of Chriſt*, but makes another Body, or at leaſt cuts off it ſelf from *that True Body*.

Schiſm does not indeed make *another Body*, but ſeems to it ſelf to do ſo; and by contumacious perſiſting therein, and withdrawing the love *due to the Body of Chriſt*, into a Society of its own, falls in the end into the *condemnation of Hereſy, to be cut off from the Body of Chriſt*, not for the different apprehenſions one Party hath from another, but for the extinguiſhing *that love*, and deſtroying *that peace* which are the bonds of *Chriſtian Union*.

And that is the true notion of *Schiſm*, I take from the uſe of the word *Schiſm* in the *natural body*, to which the Society of Chriſtians is made *analogous*, 1 Cor. 12.25. *That there ſhould be no Schiſm in the body, but that the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another; and whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſhould ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members ſhould rejoyce with it: Now you are the Body of Chriſt, and members in particular.*

That I may endeavour the clear underſtanding of this, I ſhall give very freely and modeſtly my ſenſe of this whole matter.

Every Chriſtian by believing *one Hope of his calling*, having *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptiſm, One God* and *Father of All*, as was now explained: If he be truly thus principled and perſuaded, and accordingly profeſs and act, he is as much *a member of the body of Chriſt, as any member in a natural body*, is of that *natural body*; and it is not at his own or any mans pleaſure, whether he ſhall be of that Body or not. For as there is a Law of the natural Body, by which a member having ſuch tyes with, ſuch ſupplies of nouriſhment from a Body, vigor from ſuch a ſoul inhabiting that Body, it muſt be a *member of that Body*.

Even

Even ſo there is a Law of *this Myſtical Body*, and a man ſo united, ſo ſpirited, is by the Laws the *Head* hath made for *his own Body*, who only hath the power to do it; he is, I ſay, a member of the *Body of Chriſt*.

Now as the Apoſtle ſays, intending this *Myſtical Body* eſpecially, *If the Foot ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the Head, I*
1 Cor. 12.15. *am not of the Body, is it therefore not of the Body? And if the Ear ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the Eye, I am not of the Body, is*
Ver. 24, 25. *it therefore not of the Body?* And, *God hath temper'd the Body as it hath pleaſed him, giving more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there ſhould be no Schiſm in the Body, but that the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another.*

The Apoſtle, I confeſs, is ſpeaking of the order of Higher and Lower, Honourable and leſs Honourable members of the Church, under the reſemblance of the natural graduations in the members of the Body.

But the reaſon being taken from the Laws of each Body, argues, It is no caſe at the arbitrement of any who ſhall be of *this Body*, but as that *Law of Chriſt* hath defin'd, and ſo far as that Law hath extended that *Body*, ſo far the love and care of it, and for it, muſt go, elſe there will be *Schiſm*. Seeing there is not elſe that proper care of the members, who muſt according to the Laws of the Body, be members, whether one or other pleaſe to have it ſo.

Thus then I ſuppoſe, there is a Society, or Societies of Chriſtians, in this or any part of the world; *they hold Chriſt*
Col. 2. 19. *the Head*; they hold thoſe *great points of union* I have been ſpeaking of; they are not chargeable with opinions or practiſes plainly contrary, or undermining thoſe acknowledgments therein, though they may be guilty of errors in *Doctrine*, *Worſhip*, or *Practice*; yet not ſo Fundamental, as to tear them off from the Body, or make them another Body; or they are miſunderſtood to hold ſuch errors, though indeed they do not, or they are not errors: or they refuſe to join

join in such opinions, or practises, as they conceive not allowable by the word of God, though not destructive errors; nor can they that require their compliance, pretend on their part, that the things are absolutely necessary to make a member of the Body of Christ.

In this case, I say, he is the only Schismatick that hath not a *love*, that hath not a *sympathy* with the Body; and therefore if neither party hath, they must be both *Schismaticks*.

There may be Modest, Peaceable Dissents, and different practises upon them: There were such notorious enough among the First Christians, as the Apostle plainly discourses, *Rom.* 14. for he says, *They that eat, eat to the Lord, and give God thanks: they that eat not, yet still to the Lord they eat not, and give God thanks:* One for his Religious eating, the other for his Christian Liberty. Here are acts of Worship in which there could be no Uniformity, they could not joyn one with another. Ver. 6.

So, *He that regardeth the day, to the Lord he regardeth it: he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he regardeth it not.* Here again are acts of Reverence of God, but there's no Uniformity; yet still the Apostle (*Rom.* 15. 5.) supposes and exhorts, that in the midst of these differences in which he had positively made an allowance to each part, they would yet *be like-minded one to another, according to Christ Jesus*, after his Exemplar, or having their eye upon the same *Image of Christ* instamped on both.

Yea, and notwithstanding these Discords, he supposeth they *might with one mind and one mouth glorifie God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, both in those common things wherein both agreed, and were perfectly *one*; and also in those things wherein they had one common Intention, and Design, *center'd in the one point of doing all to the Lord*; whether they *eat*, or *eat not*; whether they *regarded a day, or regarded it not.* And therefore the Apostle further Ver. 6.

v. 7. ther exhorts them *to receive one another, as Christ hath received us, to the glory of God*, notwithstanding our many faults. So Christians, notwithstanding the faults they truly, or mistakingly esteem so in one another; yet still they should own one another as Christians; they should mutually partake the benefits of one anothers Christianity, and the publique administrations of it as to the things wherein they are as one, and even in the things they dissent, in this conspire; in the direction of all to the glory of God. All this plainly shews, that *Unity* consists not in *Uniformity*; *Unity* of *Worship*, not in *Uniformity* of *Worship*; nor does Schism necessarily follow upon such different apprehensions or practises: And thus, so far as we can perceive, the Apostle *ordained in all Churches* there should still be communion in the midst of differences.

And indeed, he that being a Christian, deprives himself *of the abundance of the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel*, running every way among Christians, or of the mutual impartment they make of *spiritual gifts and graces one to another*, upon the account of small differences only, is unthrifty of the advantages offer'd to him by God, and straitens to himself, the Divine Spirit in its free emanations every way, and throughout all the members of Christ, without attending our sinful differences, which are no rule at all of its effusions or restraints, when it flows among all that are true *Christians:* it doth not consider in its gifts, that one party is by it self, another by it self, but gives to all that are truly of *Christs Body*; yet the sinful severity of one party, and too often of both, may *displease*, *grieve*, and
1 Thes. 5. 19. in great Degrees *quench the Holy Spirit* in its donations, as to one, or both guilty parties.

And indeed this is another of those things that does more truly import *Schism*, than external differences do; when those that are truly Members of the same Body, do deny to yeild, to convey, or to receive, and give Circulation

to

to the Communications of the Divine Spirit through the whole Body.

For thus men may become putrid, gangren'd, or mortified Members, and ſo deſerve to be *cut off*; not for their different ſentiments, which ought to be tollerated, but for that they will not *Communicate*, or *will not be Communicated* with; they will not *give* or *receive* the *Gifts Chriſt hath given to men*, as they flow among all, becauſe of ſome things wherein they differ: It is even a *Schiſm* from mankind, a diviſion from that, not to receive thoſe common Benefits of Reaſon from any that have had them, and been willing to Communicate them; the Scripture it ſelf Communicates with the *Reaſon of Philoſophers*, and *wiſer Poets*, in what they ſaid well and wiſely, as *that we are Gods offspring*. Ephes. 4. 8. Acts 17. 28.

A wiſe Chriſtian does not deprive himſelf in his private Freedoms of true Reaſon, or Chriſtian ſenſe, though he culls it out of much droſs; nor of the benefits of Chriſtian worſhip, where he may find Good, if the worſhip be not ſo corrupted, that one cannot be ſeparate from the other. There's a general Charity and Tolleration muſt be of humane infirmity in the beſt adminiſtration of it by men, for there is a *charge* of our *Folly* upon all our appearances before God, viſible not only to God, who *charges his Angels with it*, but to our ſelves; ſo that if *Angels hide their faces*, much more thoſe whoſe *houſes are of clay*, and *their foundation in the duſt*. Yet there are advantages of Edification that are indeed to be had, for which we are accountable to God, and ſo our withdrawing our ſelves, (without juſt Cauſe) and the degrees of our withdrawing ſhall be accounted *Schiſm*. But of this, and what may be objected in theſe caſes, more may be ſpoken under the next Head.

If any man indeed from want of Love, and with a deſign to divide, ſcatters, and ſows Opinions, or *cauſes Diviſions*, is an Enginere of Diviſion: Such a man hath the true Spirit of *Schiſm*, and is to be mark'd and avoided, *Rom.* 16. 17.

But there may be diſſents, there may be diſlikes in many caſes, and yet no *Schiſm*, no cutting off, no more than of a Member in the Body that is weak, or deformed, or wounded, or it may be none of theſe, but for eaſe, or conveniency would poſture it ſelf ſomewhat differently from the reſt. But ſtill in all caſes there muſt be a *care for the body*, and he that withdraws is in danger, and that for the withdrawing, not for the different apprehenſions.

Men may withdraw in ſome points of outward Communion, we ſee they may locally ſeparate on occaſion; they may deny to conform to what they think amiſs, as one Member is not bound to deform or wound it ſelf, that it may be Uniform with another, that is ſo wounded, or deformed.

There may be very different Motions, and ordering the ſeveral Members on ſundry accounts, yet *no Schiſm.*

No man can ſay then, I will not be of ſuch a Body of Chriſtians, for ſuch an Opinion, for ſuch a form of worſhip, or becauſe they will not ſo conform, when *All* are the *Body of Chriſt*, and *Members in particular.*

It may be ſaid, *Are theſe not of the Body therefore?* or thoſe not of the *Body therefore*, becauſe in ſome thing they differ, when both parts *hold the Head*, and are Members according to the *Laws* of the *Head?*

What can be ſaid againſt it? but that the Laws of men interpoſing, or the Laws of particular Churches interceeding, make a difference betwixt the caſe of Chriſtians now, and in the times in which the Apoſtles writ: and that now ſuch variations from the Obedience and Conformity required by thoſe Laws, become *Schiſmatical*, meerly for the Diſobedience ſake, which ſhall be preſum'd proof ſufficient of the want of love and care for the Body, and not the want of Love conſtitute the Schiſm; ſo that wherever the diſagreement in Judgment is, there ſhall be the Schiſm ſure enough; whatever the Love, and the Indications of it are in all other ſigns, tokens, and effects of it. But

But if there be the desired Conformity, all the Hatred, Emulation, Strife, and Envy against the contrary side, shall be canoniz'd, and not reputed Schism; and the sensleſneſs, or even disaffection to the general Interests of Christianity shall never be considered.

But shall the Laws of men thus make obsolete the Laws of Christ?

It is not any Law, nor an Offence against any Law, but the Law of Christ, nor against every Law of Christ, but the Laws concerning the Unity of his Body, that can make a Schism; nor does a Congregation, or a Multitude determine where the Schism lyes, when there is a difference, or a Division among Christians.

For as one man holding the substantials of Christianity, is more a Church than a Community, erring in those Fundamentals; so is one Christian full of the Love of the *Body of Christ*, most willing to do, and receive good, more truly of the Body, than Associations fill'd with *Anger*, *Wrath*, *Clamor*, and the *Spirit of Indignation*, without Mercy, without Compassion, who are indeed in their Union more *Schismatical* than the humble solitary Christian that cannot run with this stream.

For these things are not carried, nor determined by number, but by true weight and worth; as one wise man is more a Senate than a Convention of foolish, and unknowing men.

By all this that hath been spoken, it may be determined, what Answer is to be given to that Question, whether the Church of *Rome* (as it is call'd) be a true Church: to which the Answer I should give, would be plainly this.

It is no otherwise so, than a married woman that is an Adulteress, is a true Wife.

I say, not a true Woman; for the importance of Woman is more Physical, and so in this case more ambiguous;

the ſenſe of *wife*, more befitting the *moral* and *myſtical* ſenſe of *Church*; and the one not made uſe of by the Scripture in theſe caſes, the other conſtantly call'd for to repreſent the *true* or *falſe Church*.

But to keep more cloſe to what we have been upon, let me put the queſtion thus: Whether the Church of *Rome* be a part of this *one Body of Chriſt*?

And it is moſt evident, if we look upon it as ſuch an Incorporation, ſuch a Body as it is in, and by it ſelf, it is not, it cannot be other than a *Synagogue of Satan*.

For ſo it is a Body conſolidated upon other points of Union, than the Body of Chriſt is; for though it takes in them, yet it adds foreign, and aliene of its own, and thoſe very many, and ſuch as deſtroy, if not all, yet ſome of the principal, by ſuch a deep corruption of them changes them ſo, that they cannot be known to be the true ones, or alike *precious Fundamentals laid by Chriſt Jeſus and his Apoſtles*.

It is a Body animated with another ſpirit, the very *ſpirit of Antichriſt*; a ſpirit of blood and cruelty, againſt all
Revel. 11. 1. that keep to the *true meaſures* of the *Temple and Altar of God, and his true worſhip therein*.

The Body of that *falſe Church* hath its fabrick put together and united, not by *that faith at once, and once for all,*
Jud. 3. *given to the Saints*, but by *ſucceſſive*, and *growing Tradition*.

And then the *ſpirit of it* perſecutes out of all the com-
Rev. 13. 17, 18. mon priviledges of Humanity, ſo far as it can, *not to buy nor ſell*; thoſe that will not receive *that mark* of it ſelf, *its name*, and the *number of it*, viz. *that falſe Chriſtianity*, that
Revel. 21. 14, 16, 17. forſaking *the ſtable four-ſquare* of the *true body of Chriſt*, the *ſquare-roots of Truth*, out of which Chriſtianity riſes; the *Twelve Apoſtolick Foundations* upon which the Church of Chriſt aſcends, ſets up its *Odd, uneven, unequal Antichriſtianiſm, part Chriſtian, part Pagan, part true, part falſe*.

And

And this is all the care we need take for the *Body* of the *Roman* Church, it is not *the Body of Christ*, it is not of the *general Assembly, and Church of the first-born written in Heaven*. It deserves not that love and care due to the Body. As it is so incorporated, it is irreconcilable with the Body of Christ, and ought to be so declar'd. Heb. 12. 23.

But there may lye hid numbers among them, who like the *seven thousand* in the *Israelitish Baalism*, who being ignorant of the *depths of Satan* in that false Religion, to whom the Christianity that remains, though blended with that corruption, separates it self, and as oyl rises uppermost to them. To these we may allow the charitable hopes of Salvation, not for their *Popish tincture*, but for their Christianity. For all that is *Popish* is their danger, and their extreme danger. It is the Christianity, pure separated Christianity, that is their only hope, and it is only like the hope of an Antidote working in the midst of a great deal of Poyson. Or like true Principles of *Natural Religion* in the midst of *Paganism*, the event of either of which operations must (as I have said before) be left only to *God*.

In the mean time, their damning all to Hell for *Hereticks*, that are not of their Communion, is but one of the *Blasphemies, of the Names* of which they are full, and makes no man among them the safer, but his case becomes the more desperate, that *Protestancy* argued from the very charity, and compassion, of it to be more infallibly the Religion of Christ, allows all the compassionate hopes that can be to some who are in the midst of that contagion, and yet may be preserv'd from the deadliness of it; but *cruel Popery*, as much as it is able, prepares *flames* in this world, and that which is to come, for all that have not the faith of *removing mountains*, not only of *Improbability* but even *Impossibility*, that their monstrous Principles have rais'd, and set in the way of Christian Communion with them.

And

And thus I have ſetled the ſecond Head of Diſcourſe concerning the efficacy of *Chriſtian Religion* to peace; *That Divine Balſom of love* running throughout the Body, and particularly to the agrieved parts, where there is an *union* upon the Fundamental *Unities* of Chriſtianity, and ſo certainly preſerves, and ſecures Peace.

I come now to the Third Head of Chriſtian Peace.

3. *The Rules Chriſtianity gives the true Profeſſors of it, for the imbodying themſelves one with another, will ſhew how ſincerely it deſigns peace.*

For ſome may think if there be no obligation of mutual Conformity in particular ſocieties of Chriſtians, how can there be any ſuch Societies? if there may be ſuch Separations among Chriſtians, as that there be not requir'd a concurrence in all points of Doctrine, Worſhip, and Practiſe, under peril of the dreadful ſin of Schiſm, Chriſtianity will be like a *general notion*, ſubſiſting in no *diſtinct particular bodies*; or like an univerſe of Atoms without any connexion; and then how can they that have nothing to do one with another, be at peace one with another. If there be no aſſociations of Chriſtians, no Churches particularly united and conſtituted, there is no opportunity to practiſe that peace and ſubmiſſion to order, which ſuch Societies oblige to, and which the *Apoſtle* rejoiced to behold in the Church of the *Coloſſians*. If all the love and peace of Chriſtians be only that which is extended to the *Univerſal* Church, or to Chriſtians occaſionally in particular, every one having his own private apprehenſions to himſelf, then is there no room for this more diſtinct exerciſe *of Love and Peace*.

Col. 2. 5.

I ſhall therefore now addreſs my ſelf to conſider the Laws of Chriſtianity, for Chriſtians ſo imbodying themſelves, that they may diſplay all the *general vertues of Chriſtianity*

ſtianity in their particular ſtations in the Churches of Chriſt; and ſo I ſhall lay down theſe three Rules concerning this very weighty Point.

1. *That the firſt Congregating of Chriſtians is to Chriſt himſelf*, as to the *Head*, in whom the *whole Body is principally united*, and the Union with him is the Meaſure, and true Law of their Union one with another, as the *Apoſtle* joyns their *Order* and *Faith in Chriſt* together: they give themſelves, firſt to the *Lord*, and then to one another: Col. 2. 5. This was the Apoſtles method to preach, *firſt Chriſt Jeſus to be the Lord*, and *themſelves Servants for Chriſts ſake*. 2 Cor. 4. 5. All Chriſtians are firſt Converted to the *Faith of Chriſt*, and *ſo added to the Church*. Acts 2. 44, 47.

And this is moſt neceſſary to be conſidered, becauſe if the firſt *gathering of Chriſtians* were to the *Church*, the *Order* and *Peace* of that *Church* would be the *Rule* of all their *after-Action*, and *Regulation* of themſelves, and they muſt take every thing on truſt from that; but if the firſt *Point of Union be Chriſt*, and *Faith in him*, that ſhall over-rule, wherein ſoever a *Church* may deviate from the *Laws of Chriſt*,

2. From hence alſo it follows, that the Union of Chriſtians is, firſt with the *πανηγυρις*, the *general Aſſembly*, and *Church of the firſt-born*, whoſe Conſtitution is fixed upon the Eſſential, unalterable, and ever the ſame Points of *Chriſtianity*; and the worſhip agreeable to them, and in which all true *Chriſtians* muſt concenter, that they may be the *Body of Chriſt*. This is that Church againſt which the *Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail*, it ſhall *never dye*, *it ſhall never fail*, which yet we know may befall *all particular Churches*; they have, and perpetually may fail, *Mat.* 16. 18.

Now thus far I have already ſhown, There is as firm a Foundation of Peace laid, as the Underſtanding of man can conceive in this ſtate of things here below in a degenerate world of humane nature.

3. But

3. But beſides this, there are *particular Aſſemblies* that are nearer to Chriſtians in particular, and to which they ought to Unite, as either having received the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity by their Miniſtry, and ſo having been to them one of *thoſe Pillars* to which the Chriſtian Doctrine being affixed, it hath offered it to all Comers, and to
1. Tim 3. 15. them in particular. Such Aſſemblies being a *reſt*, or *repoſe* of Truth, the Communication of it hath been made to all that have been near it, and particularly to them whom we ſuppoſe ought to unite with them; or it is the ſame thing, if their Parents incorporated in *ſuch Churches*, and profeſſing Chriſtianity in Communion with them, have directed their Education into the acknowledgment of *Chriſt*, and the Profeſſion of him, together with the *Chriſtians* of ſuch or ſuch a *Congregation*; or that they themſelves having conſidered the whole circumſtances of their ſtate in relation to Chriſtianity, have found it moſt to their advantage of *Edification* to unite with ſuch a Congregation of Chriſtians. All theſe, or any of theſe, may create an obligation to ſuch conjunctions.

But becauſe the hotteſt diſputes in relation to Chriſtian Practiſe, ſo as to conſerve *Peace*, and *Order*, have riſen in this very *juncture* of *particular Societies of Chriſtians*: I will endeavour to ſettle upon an indiſputable ſtate of things, and leave out what is more intricate, and controverſal, that we may ſee how far the Laws of Chriſt extend here to *Love*, and *Peace*, in theſe following Aſſertions.

1. That *Our Lord hath given Rules* for ſuch *Holy*, *Grave*, and *Honourable Societies*, under the name of Churches, as muſt needs invite all of the ſame excellent *Chriſtian Temper*, into their Communion, according to the opportunities they have to joyn with them, their Doctrine, Worſhip, and Practice, ſo Pure, and Heavenly, ſo evidently for the good of mens ſouls, ſo compoſed to all *true Decency*, *Prudence*,

dence, and a *Diſcipline* ſo Humble, Natural, Strict only to the trueſt benefit of thoſe that are under it, that it cannot look like a *ſecular Dominion*, but for the *ſervice of Faith, the help of Joy, the ſafety of Souls, and their eternal Intereſt.* This I am ſure every one will yeild is the *Frame* and *Conſtitution of a Chriſtian Church*, let it be found whereever it can be found: Let every *Church* ſee to it ſelf, whether it be ſo Tempered and Conſtituted or not. How then does it ſeem poſſible, that when there are ſuch Societies, Chriſtians ſhould not fly to them, as the *Doves to the windows*; ſeeing Chriſtianity improves the ſociableneſs of Humanity into the trueſt publickneſs of Spirit, and deſire to enjoy Good with more than in *ſolitude.*

2. *It is the expreſs Command of Chriſt*, and his *deſign in all his inſtitutions, that there ſhould be ſuch Aſſemblies of his people*, and ſervants, for the *Glory of his Father*, for his *own Glory*, for the *Salvation of his People*, for *Divine worſhip*, for the diſcharge of the ſeveral *Duties of Chriſtians*, for the Communications of *their Gifts and Graces:* ſo that the *forſaking* of the *Aſſemblies* of our ſelves together, as Heb. 10. 25. the *manner of ſome was*, is very little diſtant *from Apoſtacy it ſelf:* How can there then be but *Churches*, where there are Chriſtians, ſeeing ſo much of the concerns of Chriſtianity lye therein? and who indeed poſſeſs'd with thoſe concerns does not rejoice in them, and *bleſs God for his unſpeakable Gift*, in the Conſtitution of them?

3. Yet is there no *Law of Chriſt*, that main force ſhould be us'd upon men, to bring them into any *Aſſembly of Chriſtians* at all, much leſs into one rather than another, eſpecially when the main Reaſons or Motives of uniting with *Aſſemblies*, according to the *Laws of Chriſt*, preſent themſelves to mens Apprehenſions, and Conſciences more in ſome, than others. Indeed mens over-zealous Affectation of ſome, and unworthy neglect of others, as one *for Paul*, another *for Apollos*, another *for Cephas*, another *for* 1 Cor. 1. 12.

Christ, as if *these Ministers by whom they believed*, were to set up for themselves, as *Heads of Christianinty*, and to *rival Christ himself*, as if but upon the same level with them, was very justly and severely chastiz'd by the *Apostle*; but a true value for all the *Stewards of Divine Mysteries*, and *Churches*; and a particular value for those Pastors and Congregations wherein God hath vouchsafed especial Blessings for mens Souls, or gives opportunity to receive such, is very agreeable to the Gospel; as the Apostle, though he refus'd undue measures of Honour, yet assumes that of being a *Father*, as above *thousands of Instructors:* Christianity and the Ministry of it, being so Holy, and Humble a state, that no one acting according to it, either Arrogates, or Envies; so he that hath much of the Honour of it, *hath nothing over or above the measure of a Steward:* and he that hath least should have nothing under that measure, if he be found Faithful: So the Congregations have the equal Glory of being of the Body of Christ; and Churches to be little Representations of, and imbodyed with his *own Catholick Church*, in the *grand Union* of *all Christians* with the *Head*. Here then is the ground of Christian Peace and Union in Churches.

1 Cor. 4. 1.

1 Cor. 4. 15.

1 Cor. 9. 2.

4. *It is a Principle in Nature*, and much *Confirm'd* and *Exalted by Christianity*, that the *Worship of God*, and the *Salvation of mens Souls*, *should be made as Publick and Universal as may be: Go Preach the Gospel to every creature, and Baptize all Nations*, was the very Commission Christ gave to his *Apostles*, and first Embassadors, and is continued to all his Ministers to the end of the world; not of the world of that Age only, but to that end of the world which is till his *second coming*, until which he hath promised his presence. The *Great Congregation* is the most natural Receptacle of Divine Truth: the state of Religion under the Gospel, is rarely spoken of, especially when declared in its *Magnificence*, with a less *Publick Character* than

Mat. 28. 19.

Psal. 100. 1. 117. 86. 1, &c.

than *All People*, *All Nations*, *All Lands*; the *Round World* in its whole Circle, *from the riſing of the Sun, to the going down of the ſame*, *All the Earth*. True Religion aſpir'd to it, even under the narrow Diſpenſation of the Law: and in this very ſenſe, it is moſt true, that the *Apoſtle* ſaid in his time, *The whole Creation groaneth, and travelleth in pain until now*; and *the earneſt expectation of it waiteth for the Adoption*, the *Manifeſtation of the Sons of God to be gathered together under the whole Heaven*. Rom. 8. 19, &c.

Nor will *ſome of every Nation* ſatisfie the full intention of this *Magnificence*; but that *Nations* as *Nations imbodyed*, and *Kingdoms* as *Kingdoms* ſhall become the *Lords*, and *his Chriſts*, is the *plenary ſenſe* of the *Divine Spirit*, when even as of *Iſrael*, an *indiſputably National Church*, God ſhall ſay of *Heathen Nations*, as of *Egypt* and *Aſſyria*, known to *Iſrael* ſo well, and known ſo well as Rankly *Heathen*, and therefore choſen as *Repreſentatives* of the whole *Heathen world*. Yet of theſe God ſhall ſay, *Bleſſed be Egypt my people, and Aſſyria the work of my hands, and Iſrael my inheritance*; *for in that day, Iſrael ſhall be but a third with Egypt and Aſſyria*, and there ſhall be a *High-way through them All*, and *they ſhall ſerve together*; there ſhall be a *free paſſage of Truth through All. A High-way of the Goſpel* throughout, and an *Union of Worſhip*. Iſa. 19. ult.

So then, if we find ſo much for a *National Religion* in the Prophecies of the *times of the Goſpel* in the *Old Teſtament*, which graſp more than thoſe paſſages *in the New Teſtament*, which relate to the *then matter of fact* only; if our Saviours Commiſſion for *making diſciples*, and *preaching the Goſpel*, extend to *all Nations*; if the *Prophetick book* of the *New Teſtament*, *the Apocalypſe*, foretel *the kingdoms of the world* in the very ſtate of *Kingdoms*, becoming *the Lords and his Chriſts*; All theſe things argue a great encouragement of Nations receiving and making a publique profeſſion of the Goſpel, as *Nations*; even as *Families* may and

ought as *Families*. And though it be undoubtedly the great Honour and Glory of Nations to come as near and as exact and close, as may be, to the Laws and Order of Christ, in the Government, as in the Constitution of their National Christianity; yet becaufe there will, and generally falls out to be a mixture of *National Cuſtoms* in ſuch publique Adminiſtrations, a Comprimiſe of them to the Laws and Government of Nations, hence it alſo comes to paſs, there may be a diſſatisfaction in many of the ſubjects of ſuch Nations, to comply with their National Conſtitutions of Religion; Hence there is apt to ariſe Diſcompoſure and Diſquiet, if Princes or Powers exceed that exerciſe of Power allotted to them by God (as we have before diſcours'd); and alſo by the very *eſſential conſtitution of Chriſtianity*; ſeeing Chriſt hath made *none Lords of his peoples Faith* or *Divine Worſhip*, and Princes are no more than *Nurſing-fathers*. The quiet therefore, and peace of Nations is moſt advanced by ſetting up nothing in Chriſtianity but what is abſolutely neceſſary according to the Laws of Chriſt, and yeilding the tendereſt, and opening the moſt bountiful hand to the profeſſors and Miniſters of *eſſential Chriſtianity*, Covering all the faulty diviſions of Chriſtians with their Royal and compaſſionate *PURPLE*. This is moſt Princely, Generous, and Great; this is moſt exalting of *Chriſtianity* it ſelf.

But if this cannot be obtained, the next Beſt, and that which is indeed, as I have already made out, but *Juſt*, is, That no native Rights and Liberties be defaulked, nor punitive oppreſſions inflicted, but that the Honorary Rewards of Nations and Princes be adjudged to men who are of the *Publique Sentiment* in their Adminiſtrations in *Chriſtian Religion*. And this indeed cannot be excepted to, it being the *Right of National Powers* to diſpoſe of their *own* according to their own Reaſon and Judgment.

Yet

Yet is there ſtill an obligation upon *Chriſtian ſubjects*, beyond theſe Conſiderations to examine all things with the greateſt prejudice for, and on the ſide of the *National ſenſe*, eſpecially when they find the *ſubſtantials of Religion* ſecure, and in ſafety; and beſides their private adjuſtments of Chriſtian performances in particular Societies, according to the exacter Rules of Chriſtianity, as they are Judges for themſelves, to encourage, alſo promote, and as far as poſſibly they can, communicate with *National* Religion, putting the faireſt and kindeſt *interpretation*, and *Hope* upon all things, tolerating all that can without diſobedience to God be tolerated; obſerving Rites and Cuſtoms of Nations, as far as they can with ſecurity, *from vain worſhipping of God* by the *commandments of men*, both becauſe of the Honour Chriſtianity gives to Magiſtracy according to *Natural ſanctions*; and alſo, and more eſpecially becauſe of the eſteem Chriſtianity hath of a *Publique* and *National Religion*.

Let me then reſume upon the whole matter; And it plainly appears, Chriſtianity, notwithſtanding the Freedom it allows to every man's *conſcientious ſentiments*, is no Enemy, but a Friend,

1. *To Society.*
2. *To the Order and Peace that bind Society.* Yea, and ſtrictly commands them, and hath given *poſitive Inſtitutions* for them.

1. For firſt, It unites all its *true diſciples* in that *common, ample, univerſal center of Love, Peace, and Order, God and Chriſt*, to whom the *firſt dedication* of a *Chriſtian* is *made*, and in whom it always *reſts*.

2. It unites them with that moſt *publique, wiſe, rational*, and moſt *holy Aſſembly* under Heaven, the *Catholick Church*, even all that are *that one Body*, acted by that *one Spirit*, united in *one Hope, one Faith, one Baptiſm*.

In

In all which, every Christian being one with the whole, desires and rejoyces in the *encrease* of that *one Body*, the advancement of *that one Faith*, communicates in the prayers and praises of that *one Body*, sorrows in its Afflictions, *ministers to its necessities*; and if opportunity be offer'd, communicates in *Spiritual Gifts* and *Services*, with any member of it, and values not their particular Rites as any obstruction, while they agree in Essentials. And indeed, every Christian should be suffer'd to *drop that Mantle* of Ceremonies as he pleases, when he ascends in *holy offerings* of *himself* to *God*.

3. As to *particular Societies* or *Churches* of *Christians*, in which the Essentials of Doctrine and Worship are preserved uncorrupted (and so they must be, or else such Societies deserve not the *name of Churches*) and when they are in such a neighbourhood to the true Christian, that he may freely enjoy his choice, he considers these two, both recommended by the *Word of God*.

1. Private, particular Congregations that cannot conform to publique settlement, such must needs be the first Churches, when Christianity had no publique allowance; such may be still.

2. The most publique Settlement of Christian Religion; and wherein he may do it, he uses both promiscuously; wherein he must divide, he considers upon the Ballance of his most humble and impartial judgment, which tends most to the *glory of God*, to publick edification, as well as his own, and so as not to *do evil that good may come*.

If he chuses that which is more particular, as best according to his Sentiment, he is yet careful to do all he does with the greatest vigor of Charity, Inoffensiveness, and desire of promoting of that publique worship, as it contains the *Essentials of Christianity*.

If according to the sincere sense of his mind he prefer the *publique* Appointment either as *publique*, and in that regard

gard overweighing ſmaller doubts, and ſo taking the beſt advantages afforded therein, as to all the Duties, particular Congregations ſeem moſt adapted to; or that the whole *compoſure* of the *publique* is moſt agreeable to his Sentiment; he conſiders the more private, as being of the ſame body, and cannot be ſevere to the Retirers thereto; knowing, every man hath the *proper ſenſe* of his *own mind*, and what Eſſentials Chriſtianity conſiſts in, and therefore would not forcibly hale any into the publique, but remonſtrate to them, as he ſees reaſon, with mild and Chriſtian arguments, the diſadvantage of ſeparating from it, beyond plain neceſſity.

4. In the differences of judgment of publique Societies, and private, in relation to one another, or the differences of private among themſelves, the true Chriſtian ſtill keeps himſelf upon *that Love*, *Mercy*, and *Peace*, *Chriſtianity* teaches him; and in the midſt of thoſe *diverſities*, conſiders the higher tyes, worth, and value of thoſe *Unities*, wherein they all meet.

5. If a Chriſtian fall into ſuch places where the Eſſentials are corrupted, he eſteems *Religious ſolitude* the beſt *Communion*; yet refuſes not to improve any thing of *Truth* he can *extract* from ſuch *Corruption*; or if there be any *parts of publique worſhip* not ſo adulterated, but to admit a poſſible ſeparation in *the exigence of preſent ſervice to God*, yea if it were but pure *true natural worſhip*, he would not deny to *joyn* in it, when *no better can be had*, and therein is ready to take any advantage to improve that little to ſuch great purpoſes, as St. *Paul* did the *Altar to the unknown God* at *Athens*.

Laſtly, In every one of theſe *Aſſociations* He conſiders ſome univerſal and undeniable practices of all Chriſtian Churches that are yet not pertaining to the Eſſentials of Chriſtian Worſhip in themſelves, but either to natural *Order* and *Decency*, or at leaſt to the *decency* obſerved in ſuch

parts

parts of the world wherein Christians so meet, and most freely complies with them; some of which I shall observe ordained as such by the *Apostle*, *such as he ordained in all Churches.*

1. That of *every mans walking as God hath call'd him*, in *Circumcision*, or *Uncircumcision*, *Bond* or *Free*, and esteem neither state any prejudice upon his Christianity, 1 *Cor.* 7. 17, 18.

2. That of *women keeping silence in the Churches*, 1 Cor. 14. 34.

3. That of *Prophets speaking one by one*, and not in *Confusion*, and a *Medley of voices: IN A KNOWN TONGUE*, with Interpretation, *v.* 5. These pertain to natural Decency and Order in all the Churches of the Saints, *of which God is the Author*, and so are to be observed, 1 *Cor.* 14. 33, 40.

2. Decency proper to such Ages of the world, or to such Parts of the world: So I esteem those Rules of the *Apostle*, concerning *men and women Praying cover'd or uncover'd, wearing their Hair shorn or unshorn:* And in such cases the *Custom of Churches determines them*, or the *Churches of God have no Custom to be Contentious concerning them*, 1 Cor. 11. 16.

Such Rules of uncontestable Order and Decency as these, a Christian Wise, and Sober, always, and most necessarily acknowledges; *Ceremonials* and *Rituals* beyond these, he suffers to have no *Ascendent over him*, if for other Reasons *he uses them, as if he used them not.*

Now such a person as this, (and such a one Christianity teaches every man to be) I boldly affirm concerning him, he is a *Christian*, he is no *Schismatick*, he is no *Boute-Feu* in society; nor is he, (as some may mistake him), any *Ambidexter in Religion*, no more than the *Apostle*, who became to the *Jews*, *to them under the Law*, *to them without Law*, *to the weak*, *such as themselves*, *that he might by all means*

save

ſave ſome. To allow no latitude in theſe things, that are to vere to opportunity of doing good, is ſtarchedneſs, and not conſtancy, even in the judgment of a St. *Auſtyn*, who avowed the greateſt Indifferency, and freedom from Rites, having any power over him.

And ſo I have paſſed through the third Head concerning the Peace Chriſtianity deſigns, *viz.* Chriſtians *imbodying* themſelves into *Societies.*

I come now to a fourth Head, ſhewing how Chriſtianity hath provided for *Peace* and *Quiet* within its own Gates and Walls: And that is this,

4. The *Miniſterial Preſidency our Saviour hath ordained in and for the conduct of Chriſtian Religion*, is ſuch as plainly demonſtrates, he did not intend there ſhould be a *ſtriving, or a cry, or a clamorous lifting up the voice in the ſtreets for his Kingdom; that the bruiſed Reed ſhould be bro ken*, or the *ſmoaking Flax quench'd for his ſake.* For though this Miniſtry is frequently ſtyl'd a *Being over Chriſtians, a Rule over them, an Elderſhip, an Eminency*; and ſuch like ways of ſpeaking, as carry Superiority, and Submiſſion; Obedience, Honour, and High eſteem are required of Chriſtians as of an under Degree to that *higher Order* in the *Church*: Yet the Deſignation of the whole Office is wholly for the ſervice of *Chriſt* and *his Church*, for the *Adminiſtration of the word of God, to watch for ſouls, that they may give an account of them with Joy*, for the good ſucceſs of having guided them to Salvation: the Honour and Eſteem is for *their works ſake*: it is a labour in the *Word* and *Doctrine*, it is no *Dominion* or *Lordſhip* over mens *Perſons* or *Eſtates*, nor *over their Faith* or *Conſciences*; but as they offer *Divine Commands*, all their Superiority is *in the Lord.*

Mat. 12. 19, 20. Theſ. 5. 12. Heb. 13. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 1.

Heb. 13. 17.

1 Tim. 5. 17.

It is not Grandeur, or Imperiouſneſs, but *Uſe, Service, Miniſtry*, and *Work*, *that expreſſeth* this *Precedency:* not as *having Dominion over your Faith*, but *helpers of your Joy*,

parts of the world wherein Christians so meet, and most freely complies with them; some of which I shall observe ordained as such by the *Apostle*, *such as he ordained in all Churches.*

1. That of *every mans walking as God hath call'd him*, in *Circumcision*, or *Uncircumcision*, *Bond* or *Free*, and esteem neither state any prejudice upon his Christianity, 1 *Cor.* 7. 17, 18.

2. That of *women keeping silence in the Churches*, 1 Cor. 14. 34.

3. That of *Prophets speaking one by one*, and not in *Confusion*, and a *Medley of voices: IN A KNOWN TONGUE*, with Interpretation, *v.* 5. These pertain to natural Decency and Order in all the Churches of the Saints, *of which God is the Author*, and so are to be observed, 1 *Cor.* 14. 33, 40.

2. Decency proper to such Ages of the world, or to such Parts of the world: So I esteem those Rules of the *Apostle*, concerning *men and women Praying cover'd or uncover'd, wearing their Hair shorn or unshorn:* And in such cases the *Custom of Churches determines them*, or the *Churches of God have no Custom to be Contentious concerning them*, 1 Cor. 11. 16.

Such Rules of unconteſtable Order and Decency as these, a Christian Wise, and Sober, always, and most necessarily acknowledges; *Ceremonials* and *Rituals* beyond these, he suffers to have no *Ascendent over him*, if for other Reasons *he uses them, as if he used them not.*

Now such a person as this, (and such a one Christianity teaches every man to be) I boldly affirm concerning him, he is a *Christian*, he is no *Schismatick*, he is no *Boute-Feu* in society; nor is he, (as some may mistake him), any *Ambidexter in Religion*, no more than the *Apostle*, who became to the *Jews*, *to them under the Law*, *to them without Law*, *to the weak*, *such as themselves*, *that he might by all means*

save

ſave ſome. To allow no latitude in theſe things, that are to vere to opportunity of doing good, is ſtarchedneſs, and not conſtancy, even in the judgment of a St. *Auſtyn*, who avowed the greateſt Indifferency, and freedom from Rites, having any power over him.

And ſo I have paſſed through the third Head concerning the Peace Chriſtianity deſigns, *viz.* Chriſtians *imbodying* themſelves into *Societies.*

I come now to a fourth Head, ſhewing how Chriſtianity hath provided for *Peace* and *Quiet* within its own Gates and Walls: And that is this,

4. The *Miniſterial Preſidency our Saviour hath ordained in and for the conduct of Chriſtian Religion*, is ſuch as plainly demonſtrates, he did not intend there ſhould be a *ſtriving, or a cry, or a clamorous lifting up the voice in the ſtreets for his Kingdom; that the bruiſed Reed ſhould be bro ken*, or the *ſmoaking Flax quench'd for his ſake.* For though this Miniſtry is frequently ſtyl'd a *Being over Chriſtians, a Rule over them, an Elderſhip, an Eminency*; and ſuch like ways of ſpeaking, as carry Superiority, and Submiſſion; Obedience, Honour, and High eſteem are required of Chriſtians as of an under Degree to that *higher Order* in the *Church*: Yet the Deſignation of the whole Office is wholly for the ſervice of *Chriſt* and *his Church*, for the *Adminiſtration of the word of God, to watch for ſouls, that they may give an account of them with Joy*, for the good ſucceſs of having guided them to Salvation: the Honour and Eſteem is for *their works ſake*: it is a labour in the *Word* and *Doctrine*, it is no *Dominion* or *Lordſhip* over mens *Perſons* or *Eſtates*, nor *over their Faith* or *Conſciences*; but as they offer *Divine Commands*, all their Superiority is *in the Lord.*

Mat. 12. 19, 20. Theſ. 5. 12. Heb. 13. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 1. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

It is not Grandeur, or Imperiouſneſs, but *Uſe, Service, Miniſtry*, and *Work*, *that expreſſeth* this *Precedency:* not as *having Dominion over your Faith*, but *helpers of your Joy*,

ſaith the Apoſtle *Paul: Not as Lords over Gods Heritage*, but as *enſamples of the Flock*, ſaith the Apoſtle *Peter*. But above all, ought that of our *Lord* and *Maſter*, the chief *Shepherd*, and *Biſhop* to be remark'd to this purpoſe.

Mat. 20. 25. &c. Mark 10. 42, &c. Luk. 22, 25.

Having deſcrib'd the great Aſſumptions of the Princes and Chiefs of this world, he expreſly warns, and declares to his Diſciples, it is not in the nature of *Chriſtian Greatneſs* ſo to aſſume: But if any one would be accounted *Great* or *Chief* among the *Diſciples of Chriſtianity*, it muſt be his *Service*, his *plain Service*, his *Miniſtry*, that muſt ſo advance him.

δουλος

Indeed it were enough to the purpoſe, if our *Saviour* intended no more than this; Let ſuch a man that *loves Preeminency* under the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, let him be turned down into the loweſt *Claſſe*, *among the Diſciples of loweſt* and *meaneſt* Account, as a juſt Recompence of his Ambition.

But it is altogether moſt probable, our Saviour intends a more kind ſenſe, to repreſent the great ſerviceableneſs of all thoſe of more Eminent Character in his Kingdom; it is their publick Uſe that recommends them to *Grandieur* in it. For this he exemplifies in himſelf, *The Son of man came not to be miniſtred to, to be attended upon, and ſerved in ſtate, but to miniſter, to give his life a Ranſom for many.*

They who witneſs a *good Confeſſion*, who *can be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon*, who *can inſtruct publickly*, and *from houſe to houſe*, who are *apt to teach*, who can *ſerve the Lord in the ſalvation of Souls*, with *many Tears and Prayers, Day and Night*, and *ſeal their Miniſtry with their blood*, They are the *Great ones* in the *Account of Chriſtianity*.

Act. 20. 19, 31.

I ſpeak not this to detract any thing from the Figure, *Biſhops*, or any in *Eccleſiaſtical Dignities*, make by the *Favour of Princes*, who (as I have often ſaid) may diſpoſe what is their own; as they meaſure themſelves from the Donation of men, to their Superiority over men, from the

the favour of Princes and Laws, to the Government they place them in over others of their Subjects, ſo they are Great and Honourable, and may exerciſe Authority, (ſecular Authority, ſtanding indeed upon that Foot, though call'd *Spiritual*) and very reaſonably and juſtly, ſo far as I know. But this is not the *Greatneſs* proper to *Chriſts Kingdom*, that lies wholly in *ſervice*, in *condeſcenſion*, in *application to mens Souls*. As they meaſure from *Chriſt* to *Chriſtians*, this is the true Account of *Chriſtian Greatneſs*: And I am ſure this in all Juſtice, Humanity and Reaſon, tends to Peace: for what can move to it more than a ſole deſign of doing Good in them that are at the top, and an evident Aſſurance to them that are below, that, that Good is offered to them, and continually elaborated for them? what can more quiet and addulce mens Spirits, than to ſee an intire Contrivance and Compoſure of all things to their *Eternal Salvation*; as the *Apoſtle did all for the Elects ſake, that they might be ſaved?* 2 Tim. 2. 10.

Such Miniſterial Rulers are therefore the *peculiar giſt of Chriſt*, and ſpeak the *Magnificence of his Aſcenſion*. They are given for *the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying the body of Chriſt*; all great ends in a Chriſtian computation; and as there were then extraordinary qualifications immediately given by Chriſt, ſo now there ought to be ſuch in the ordinary methods of *Divine bleſſing* upon *Reading, Study, Meditation*; to which they that deſire to *ſerve Chriſt* in the *Miniſtry, are wholly to give themſelves, that their profiting may appear to all.* Ephes. 4. 11.

Church-preferments, as we call them, and Eccleſiaſtick Dignities, are often otherwiſe beſtowed, and ſerve other ends; and yet too, very often the Donors deſign theſe excellent ends; and when they are otherwiſe intended, yet are in many inſtances over-rul'd by God into great ſubſerviency to theſe ends, by the excellent Abilities and Labours of Holy and Learned Miniſters of Chriſtianity.

But be thoſe things (as they are under human Diſpoſe,) as they fall out, *the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth who are his* Great ones, even *his* true *Miniſters.* And let him that calleth himſelf by great names in Chriſts Kingdom, ſee that he make them good by his *Service* and *Miniſtry*; Not by *ſerving tables*, (I underſtand) any meaner ſervice than *feeding the ſheep of Chriſt.* A prudent Governour for Church-Orders, Rites and Ceremonies, a great Improver of Church-Revenues, however good they may be in their kind, will not riſe high enough, nor anſwer the account. Not a cunning Diſputer, a witty Haranguer, but a *Workman that need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth*, is Chriſts Miniſter.

5. In appendage to this Head, follows the Fifth account of the Peaceable Intendment of Chriſtianity to the world; and that is, *The Method of Chaſtiſing, Correcting, and Reforming the known tranſgreſſions againſt the Laws of Chriſt*; and they ſo far (as they are ſtated to the uſe of after-ages) are according to the nature of the offence, *Admonitions, Warnings, Reproofs, Rebukes, Avoiding, Rejecting* from Communion, eſteeming as *Heathens and Publicans, caſting out of the Church, conſignation over to Divine Judgment:* All theſe of a ſpiritual nature, fitted *to edification, and not to deſtruction*; to touch the Conſcience, to affect the Mind, to work ſelf-reflection, ſhame, ſelf-condemnation, repentance, and amendment, or elſe Divine Judgment muſt be awaited. It is the Rational as well as Chriſtian Expedient, of purging a Society from the *ſcandal of offendors*, from Infection and Contagion, of keeping it pure and honourable, *viz.* to diſavow them when gentler means are ineffectual. It is a moſt natural Inſtrument for Reformation and Amendment; and if it do not work ſo, when upon juſt cauſes, and by an unerring key, is not only an appeal to Divine Judgment, but a Predamnation.

2 Cor. 13. 10.

I know

I know it is debated by Learned men, Whether the *Apoſtolick Rod*, and delivery to Satan, did not operate by *corporeal infliction*, as in *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and poſſibly in the Inceſtuous perſon in a lower degree. I will however allow, It did or might; yet ſith it was extraordinary, it was immediately from heaven, much more convictive of conſcience than human proceſſes, wherein are often found much of miſtake and injuſtice: It was without noiſe or violence, nor did it allow recrimination and complaint; and therefore much more fit to go along with ſo ſpiritual Doctrine, than Worldly Judicature, and poſſibly neceſſary for *primitive* times, to give authority to the *Doctrine of Chriſt* newly ſet out in the world: So that ſtill here's none of that *barbarous hurting* or *deſtroying* in all Gods *Holy Mountain*; and moſt probably the infliction fell upon thoſe that were guilty of great offences againſt *Natural Religion*, as *Ananias*'s *falſhood of the deepeſt dye*, *Elymas his Sorcery*, *the Inceſtuous Corinthian*, thoſe that had not repented of their *Fornication*, *Laſciviouſneſs*, and *Uncleanneſs*; *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, *who had put away a good conſcience*, and then broke out into *Blaſphemy*.

1 Cor. 4. 2, 5.

Acts 5. 1.
Acts 13. 11.
1 Cor. 5. 5.
2 Cor. 12. 21.
Chap. 13. 2.
1 Tim. 1. 20.

6. The peacefulneſs of Chriſtianity is moſt evidently ſeen in its deportment of it ſelf towards Magiſtracy, of which having ſpoken much in that which concerned *Natural Religion*, taken into *union* with *Chriſtian*, I ſhall only preſent theſe following ſhort mentions of particulars, wherein Chriſtianity manifeſtly deſigns Univerſal Peace under this Head.

1. It every where *confirms* aud *aſſures* the *Divine ordination of it.*

2. It ſtates its Power in *inforcing all Natural Religion*, and Goodneſs: In reſtraining all that is impious and evil.

3. It *craves nothing* of it, but to have *Juſtice done* it according to *thoſe ſanctions*; nor prophecies any thing in the greateſt outward happineſs of Chriſtianity, but that *Princes*

Isa. 52. 15. *ces* and *Nations* shall be *sprinkled* by it, and *Supreme Princes* become its *Nursing-fathers*.

4. It enjoins upon all its servants and professors upon unjust sufferings to return nothing of *violence*, but *blessings* and *prayers* for *injuries*, and *with patience to resign life it self*.

5. It interposes not in deciding the bounds between Princes and people; but leaves that to Laws of Nature, and particular Laws of Nations, Compacts between one and the other; neither straitning nor enlarging Prerogative; neither swelling nor abating Power; nor on the peoples side curtailing or stretching Liberty. It leaves these things to be disputed in their own *Forum*, to be debated in their own proper *Senate*. For its own sake, it moves no *Landmarks* either way. It tears up no *fences*. As it therefore is horrible injury ro Christianity to proclaim (as some speak) *King Jesus* to the disturbing Earthly Kingdoms, when his Kingdom is not of this world. So is it a huge ἀμετρία ἀθολκῆς, a grand extreme on the other side, and inconsequence, to argue from the Commands of Christians sufferings, when Human Laws, and Regular State-Constitutions adjudged them to such, how unjustly soever; then indeed no resistance is to be made for the sake of Christian Religion: But it is vastly inconsequent to infer hence, any man is bound by the Law of *Christianity* tamely to resign those *Rights*, even *those Religious Rights* that are establish'd to him by the *Fundamental Laws and Statutes of a Nation*, wherein the whole Power of Kingdoms and States, Princes and People have concurr'd. For Christian Religion as Christian Religion, undermines no Laws, whether for *Princes prerogative*, or *peoples Liberties*; but leaves every thing as it finds them, to their own just rights according to Law; and if it self come to be one of those Rights, It doth not repeal from any the Legal Right of it self, which is the greatest and surest Rule that a Religion can guide it self by, not

to

to disturb, but to extend peace to the world: The Prince, the People (being for it, or any thing it teaches or does) most secure of their own interest, though it fall out oftentimes to the greatest sufferings of its servants in all worldly Interest, even loss of life it self, and that with all circumstances of painful dying, which yet it is able to *recompence in the resurrection of the just*, that *better resurrection*.

There remains nothing to compleat this whole Discourse of the excellency of *Christian Religion*, in the Foundations of Peace it lays, but the Universal Goodness, Holiness, Purity, Mercy, and all the most generous fruits of these, it is so concerned in, and enjoins with so much absoluteness; the heavenly and eternal glory it directs the earnestness, zeal, and highest ardor of all Christians upon; so that while they are in *the way of well-doing, seeking honour, glory, and immortality*, they have all the arguments of love and peace working within them, and governing all their outward Actions. But I have so every way prevented my self in this part, that I shall not at all further pursue it, but recollect this whole Discourst into the Conclusion of it.

And in the first place, it carries upon this very sad and melancholy Contemplation, The so great and nice preparation of *Natural Religion*, of *Christian Religion*, for the peace and quietness of the world, How monstrously unsuccesful hath it been among men!

What great Heats and Disquiets have Differences in Religion been still both the true and unpretended Occasions, and the pretended only, and counterfeit Causes of in the world?

What Blood and Cruelty, what Slaughters and Massacres, what Exquisite Torments, and Artifices of Barbarity have been call'd for, Contrived and Executed in this Quarrel?

On one side men have made Religion a cover and shelter for Sedition, Rebellion, Commotion and Change of Government,

vernment, perfectly againſt the whole deſign of it.

On the other ſide, Worldly Powers have charg'd all offers of a Religion never ſo true, never ſo peaceable, as if it was bringing out the Engines of Deſtruction, for the blowing up States, and therefore judg'd moſt reaſonable, the Authors and *Proſelytes* of it ſhould be purſued with ſevereſt puniſhments.

And without any Relation to theſe Concernments, the very different apprehenſions in Religion have been thought worthy of the extreameſt Hate, and moſt barbarous Perſecutions, of Racks, Wheels, and Tortures, as if men having deſtin'd one another *to Hell in another world* on theſe accounts, thought it but fit the *Hell* ſhould be begun here; or elſe (which hath been ſometimes a pretence for this ſavage method,) they would *pull them with violence* (indeed) *out of that fire, or ſave them from thoſe flames*, yet *ſo as by fire*; cruelly forcing them thereby into the Religion of their Judges.

Now how contrary this is to the nature of True, Rational or Chriſtian Religion, I have all along ſhewn.

But however multitudes of the Votaries of Religion, whether true or falſe, have with incredible patience, and oftentimes with joy and triumph embrac'd their ſufferings, and gloried in their death and torments; eſteeming their pains, *Martyrdom*, a name of honour in this world, and of great expectations in the *world future*.

So that a very conſiderable part of Story is fill'd up with great undertakings upon account of Religion, with the ſeverity of Laws againſt any thing ſtrange, or innovated in the profeſſion of Nations, and the *Martyrologies* of thoſe that have ſuffer'd for being otherwiſe perſwaded.

Now if a man values and eſtimates things by this worlds peace, happineſs, and quiet, he would be ready to praiſe and applaud Atheiſm and Irreligion, and wiſh there never had been the name or notion of any other in the world, to

give

give origin to ſo much miſchief and inhumanity.

Eſpecially conſidering the Chriſtian Religion, the moſt excellent tender Religion, moſt compaſſionate of Humane Nature; moſt Clear, Intelligible, Rational, Vertuous, freeſt from Ceremony, moſt aliene from Superſtition, moſt modeſt and humble, moſt ſubmiſſive to Government, at its firſt entrances into the world endur'd the whole weight and body of malice and cruelty againſt it; was ſown in the *Blood*, and grew up as from the *Graves of the Confeſſors and Martyrs of it*, being firſt founded in the *death* of the *Author*, though he indeed gave proof of the Truth and laſt iſſue of it in a *Glorious Reſurrection.*

And ſince it hath poſſeſs'd it ſelf of the acknowledgment and Authority of Thrones, Princes, Laws and Governments, Baptiz'd whole Nations into its profeſſion, it hath been moſt ſtrangely perverted from its whole deſign and intention, into the ſame inſtrument of Ambition and Cruelty upon the various accounts and occaſions, that *Church-Hiſtory* and other *Chronologies* ſwell, and labour in the Relation of.

Yea, even ſmall and valueleſs things, if weighed upon its own juſt *Ballance*, have yet given fury to the greateſt Animoſities, and Diſſentions, which have not been waſhed off, but in an *Ocean of Blood.*

In ſum, this of all Religions hath been firſt moſt perſecuted, hated, and oppos'd by Grandees and Chiefs of the world in its firſt approaches to the world, and ſince by the ſeveral Diſſentions within it ſelf, been the *Field of Blood*, made uſe of ſometimes by deſign, ſometimes by angry power; but ſo, as that the pureſt and moſt ſincere Profeſſors have been moſtly dyed in their own gore; ſo that by the ſame ſtandard of worldly intereſt, next to Atheiſm and Irreligion, *Antichriſtianiſm*, or denial of Chriſtian Religion would ſeem next to be choſen.

But when we more wiſely and juſtly apprize the mighty and unconquerable Reaſons for *Religion in general*, and the particular, vaſt, and momentous Arguments for the reception of *True Chriſtian Religion*; it muſt needs lead us to other much more *ſerious* and *reconciling* Conſiderations.

And who that is a *Grave Thinker*, having been firſt put into an amaze, then into the moſt melting and relenting Commiſerations, that the world ſhould be ſo unhappy in that wherein its greateſt happineſs conſiſts, that there ſhould be ſuch deplorable inſtances of rage, and even Helliſh cruelty that cannot be drawn out, or expreſt in any ſuitable and condecent language, upon the account of that Religion, that profeſſes every where of it ſelf, it came not to *deſtroy mens lives*, but to ſave them; even then when the miſtaken *Zealots* of it would have had *Fire from Heaven*, in a preſent revenge upon thoſe that would not receive the moſt compaſſionate *founder of it*, the *greateſt lover* of *Humane Nature* that ever was in the world.

Who, I ſay, that ponders theſe things would not ſet himſelf to find out the cauſes of theſe evils, and ſadly bethink himſelf how they ſhould ſo generally fall out among Chriſtians themſelves.

And indeed he that doth but a little conſider, will find firſt, It is a very good anſwer to endleſs cavil, and querulouſneſs againſt the beſt of things, that can be obtain'd here, that every thing in this world is injur'd, diſorder'd, and defiled by the pravity of Humane Nature, there being nothing in the whole *Univerſe of Good and Excellent*, that is not debaucht by the luſts of men; or where ſhall he fix himſelf, that would upon earth remove himſelf from all things that have been by ſin (if but poſſible to be) deprav'd by ill uſe to ill ends?

But yet this is not anſwer enough for the defiling the *very light*, and the *Sun*; even Religion it ſelf; and that in ſo great degrees, and to ſo heinouſly contrary ends; for where-

whereas the very height and tranſcendency of Divine Things might in all reaſon plead an exemption from ſuch debaſements, yet coming ſo near to our corrupted *Atmoſphære*, it is even as the very light, though in it ſelf remaining always pure and clear as it ſelf, notwithſtanding proſtituted by men to their own abominable impieties.

This then alone anſwers ſo great a Doubt, That God is exceedingly offended and diſpleas'd with *Humane Nature*, that ſo excellent an inſtrument of the Divine Glory, the Happineſs of the world in preſent, and the eternal life and happineſs of it hereafter, ſhould be depraved into an inſtrument of greateſt unhappineſs and miſchief to mankind, both *in this world*, and *that which is to come.*

For ſo far as we can ſee, much of that Blood and Devaſtation, Tumult and Convulſion, much of the Cruelty and Inhumanity that hath fallen out, had been ſav'd and prevented, had it not been that Religion had a place in the world.

Much of that deep and almoſt inexpiable guilt that hath been contracted through the perſecution of the True Religion, and oppoſition to it from the falſe, had never come into account now, or at the *day of Judgment.*

It is therefore evident upon the whole ſtate of *Humane Nature*, that though there is a main difference in regard of the goodneſs of God in the Mediator, between it and the *Angelick Nature fallen*, that one is univerſally in *chains of darkneſs to the Judgment of the great Day*; and without hopes of remedy; the other not univerſally, nor *without hope*: Yet thoſe *chains* are due to the one, even as to the other, and in what degrees to the Divine Juſtice in its wiſdom it ſeems meet, it caſts men into them; even as it diſtributes as it pleaſes, meaſures of the puniſhment of ſin, in taking the forfeitures of the Bleſſings of Earth of ſome, and not of others, when it was given to the children of men alike as to their ſubſtantial enjoyment, however *one might*

have differ'd from another in glory; and laying great calamities upon ſome, and not on others, as greatly deſerving of them; and that in this time of *general patience*. If it were not thus, no reaſon could be given why ſo great Tracts of *Humane Nature* lye in the *valley of the ſhadow of death*, having no *light* of the *True Religion* to *ſhine* upon them; And why without the great diſcompoſure and diſturbance of the world, and without the ruin and deſtruction of thoſe that make the offers, there can be no offers of better made to them.

If it were not thus, no reaſon could be given why there is ſo great a corruption, even of Chriſtianity it ſelf, where it is generally profeſt; and the attempts of Reformation in Chriſtianity, are every whit as dangerous, or more than the perſuaſions to it addreſt to *Turks* or *Pagans*; the lingring Acts of Cruelty in the *Inquiſition* and horrible bloodineſs of *Maſſacres*, exceeding any thing of any other kind.

Laſtly, If it were not thus, thoſe ſmaller Differences among Proteſtants themſelves, who have had opportunity to look over the unreaſonableneſs and prodigious Inhumanities of *Pagans*, *Turks*, *Jews*, and *Papiſts*, in their perſecutions, could never have brought forth ſo much of ſpleen, hate, and ſufficient proportions of the ſame cruelty among themſelves, when they have had before their eyes, not only thoſe pregnant motives to deteſtation of ſuch Barbarity, in thoſe forenamed examples, but that mirrour of patience, meekneſs, forbearance, *The Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*.

Nor is it unworthy of good obſervation to this purpoſe, that the proceedings againſt offenders in the Laws of *Natural Religion*, or *Morality*, are generally with leiſure, moderation, proportion between the offence and the puniſhment, a compaſſion of *Humane Nature*, even where ſeverity is of greateſt neceſſity.

But in what men levy againſt different Religions, all is carried in ſtorms and whirlwind, in fury and rage, in blood, ſmoke,

ſmoke and fire; arguing to us, That the Cauſe not fairly lying before *Humane Juſtice*, there being an error in the very foundation of the procedure, the evil increaſes, and grows upon mens hands, till it becomes too mighty for any Government, and ſo carries all before it into prodigious violence of Ferity and ſalvageneſs. And alſo, that Divine Juſtice therein ſhewing to man his great degeneracy, and liableneſs to Divine ſeverity, as God himſelf pleaſes, ſuffers the power of that *Degraded Spirit, the God of this World*, to triumph in nothing more than the abuſing *Religion*, and eſpecially *Chriſtian Religion*, that great Contrivance of Heaven, for mans recovery out of the ſtate of Devils; and to make it like an Engine of deſtruction to recoil upon man himſelf, and fly every way with terrible death and ruin, as if *Hell* rather than *Heaven* came along with it.

Yet notwithſtanding all this, it is moſt certain this whole miſery is conceiv'd and brought forth by the ſin and unworthineſs of man to himſelf, by his own ſtupidity and folly, or by his *wiſdom*, that is worſe than *folly, earthly, ſenſual, and Deviliſh*; for the interpoſal of the Mediator runs ſo through the whole ſtate of *Humane Nature*, that there are ſure ground-works laid how men might in every caſe recover happineſs, even out of miſery and degeneracy; and principally in this very Cardinal Point of that Happineſs, *True Religion*, and the *Peace* and *Mercy* of it, care is taken how the World might be ſecured if it would, both from the Ambitious and unquiet man in his deſigns; how Government, Authority, Soveraignty, might be kept ſafe; and yet unbeſmear'd too with *Martyrs Blood*; yea, even the blood of thoſe, who, though they are miſtaken, yet are willing to profuſe it for their Religion: For whom it ſhould move pity, the nearneſs of their caſe to the *Honour* and *Honeſty* of dying for *True Religion*. I mean when plain Foundations of *Natural Religion* are not deſtroyed, for that caſe deſerves no more mercy than poyſoning Fountains,

tains, or ſetting on *fire*, if men could, *the whole courſe of Nature.*

Now to diſcover this path or way to univerſal peace in Religion, (which is like *Wiſdoms*), *The Vulturs eye hath not ſeen it, nor the Lions whelp trod it; Death and deſtruction ſay, It is not with them; and well they may, For it is the way of peace, which they have not known, though they may have heard the fame of it with their ears. It is the way found out and declared by him that made weights for the winds, and ballance for the clouds. It is the way of the fear of the Lord, the beginning of Wiſdom, and departing from evil, the true underſtanding:* There lyes the peace of *Natural Religion.*

Job 28. 7.

It is the way of Chriſtianity, ſeen and publiſht by *Chriſt Jeſus*, the *Way, the Truth, and the Life:* That's the peace of *Chriſtian Religion.*

And it is certainly the proper excellency of Chriſtian Religion, and its very intention to bring this way both as Natural and Chriſtian, to light; to lay the grounds of it, to give the Rules and Meaſures of it, to ſweeten mens tempers to the good nature of it. That every one in a clear and ſtill air, not darkned with Clouds full of Thunder, and terrible with the Lightning of dreadful Laws, and Bloody Executions, may ſee, may be wary in the choice of his conduct of himſelf, to his unchangeable ſtate; and may therefore have light, have room, have ſtill and ſilence, in which he may *weigh every thing, prove every thing.*

Now that which I have now declar'd, is a way moſt agreeable to the Word of God, and that Reaſon which reſpects either all mankind, or all Chriſtians. This is the Contrivance of Chriſtianity's providing, *That the Wolf and the Lamb may dwell together, that the Lion may lye down with the Kid, that the child may play on the hole of the Aſp; that there may be no hurting, or deſtroying in all Gods Holy Mountain. That Knowledg of God and True Religion may have*

have the ſame ſcope and freedom that the waves have in the Sea. Chriſtianity hath always the Grounds ready by it, and with it.

And to preſent them in their Rational Poſſibility is a Vindication of Divine Juſtice, Righteouſneſs, and Goodneſs, an Offerture to man to be happy: Nor will the Platform be always *Utopian*, the days will come when it ſhall paſs into life, power, and effect.

Now whenever this ſhall be in its Glory, that Degeneracy of mankind, that *curſe that lyes upon the earth, that vail of the covering ſpread upon the face of all Nations, that ſevere indignation of God againſt Humane Nature ſhall be removed.*

The Spirit ſhall be poured out upon all fleſh, the light of one day ſhall be as the light of ſeven. All fleſh ſhall ſee the Glory of the Lord together. So come, come thus Lord Jeſus: Even ſo, Amen.

I have thus far made a *Lamentation* upon the General State of the World, in relation to Religion; which till ſome ſuch mighty Influence come down from Heaven (as I have intimated) upon it, is like to be *for a Lamentation:* For the *dark places of the Earth will be full of the Habitations of Cruelty*; and it is certain, the *Habitations of Cruelty* will be furniſhed with the *Inſtruments of Cruelty.* And therefore, *Oh my Soul, come not into their ſecret, unto their Aſſembly my Honour be not thou united; for in their anger they ſlay and deſtroy; and in their ſelf-will they dig down walls. Curſed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel. Their drink-offerings of Blood will I not offer, nor take their name of Religion into my mouth.* I ſhall therefore leave them, and addreſs the cloſe of this Diſcourſe to the *Saints that are in the earth, and to the Excellent in whom is all my Delight.*

And

And in the first place, it calls us to the Review of the *Excellent Christian Religion*; even as *Natural Religion*, all *essence*, all *substance*, trace it throughout all its Doctrine, Worship, Rules of Life, they are all by their very Goodness, *plain to him that understandeth*, and *right to them that find knowledg*; there is *nothing froward nor perverse in them*; its bands of peace are not politick, or worldly Intrigues; no *Ceremonial Symbolism*, or *Ritual Shibboleth*, but *ponderous Verities*, and *Divine Love*.

All the shew or appearance any Religion can make, is but a ray borrowed from its Divine perfection; a derivation from its light, or from *Natural Religion* which is *it self*; for *pure Natural Religion* is *Christian Religion*; if you suppose a soul without sin mounting from its Creature-probationership to its highest perfection as *Adam*, if not having sin'd, *from Paradise to Heaven*. And *Christian Religion* is *Natural Religion*, suppose the soul fallen, and rising back from its Apostacy to that perfection by the *Redeemer*.

2. Let me apply this Discourse to the Comprimise of all Differences betwixt Protestants, and particularly in our *English* Christian Nation; not defining any Controversal Point, but urging to that end such undoubted Principles, as I have insisted upon in this Discourse.

1. That supposing a *National Church* cannot be made out to satisfaction, yet *Christian Kingdoms* are so considerable a point of *Scripture-Prophecy*, that it cannot be denied. So far therefore as National Worship can be agreeable to a mans Conscience, making inquiry and most curious search into the Word of God, both as to his *Duty*, and to his *Liberty* also, and possible *Freedom* from *Scruple*; every Christian is oblig'd to *Glorifie God* in the publick services of him, and *Confession of the Faith of Jesus Christ with his native Country*. Suppose a man should retire to particular private Congregations, to supply what he may find wanting in the National Constitution, to compleat all the Duties

ties of Christian Communion, and the advantages of it; yet still he is bound to promote and encourage *National Religion*, so far as it extends, to avoid as much as is possible, all *Divisions*, and profest separation from it, by putting the *fairest Construction*, and the *kindest hopes* upon those things that seem doubtful; and as little infringing the Authority of Laws, as may be consistent with sentiments of Conscience, and a due enjoyment of that liberty God hath given men of judging for their own souls, as in his sight; *viz.* in those things that are not Laws of Natural Religion, and so indisputable; or those *Grand Points of Christianity*, in which a Christian can have no allowance: in all things else a Christian hath a *liberty*, but so, that he must not use that his *liberty* as a *cloake of maliciousness*, but as the *Servant of God*, *give due Honour to all.* 1 Pet. 2. 16.

I would therefore propose these three Considerations, to draw men to the greatest Conjunction with *National Religian*, that can by any means be reconcil'd with *good Conscience towards God.*

Considerat. 1. That if we examine things by Scripture, there are many abatements from the supposeable evil of external Observances, of which we may lawfully make our utmost Advantages to so great a Good, as our *Professed Conjunction with National Religion*, while substantially good, though the *High Places*, I mean things equivalent in our opinion be *not taken away*, as in the times of the Excellent *Kings of Judah.* 1 Kings 15. 14.

First then, as fundamental to this case, I suppose these two things Equiponderating one another.

1. *The high Character of National, Christian Religi-*

on in the Word of God, as I have proved.

2. *The Errors ſuppos'd in ſuch a National Conſtitution.* Now *Reformation of National Conſtitutions* in Religion, are unconteſtably in the Supreme Power of a Nation: what then ſhall we do till theſe ſuppos'd Errors of ſuch an account as the *High Places*, are remov'd? we muſt either not worſhip in conſent with our *Nation*, which ſeems as natural as with our *Families*, and much countenanc'd by the *Scripture*; or we muſt wait the ſeaſons of *publick Reformation*; in the mean time attending *publick Worſhip*, and avoiding with all the Wiſdom and Prudence we can, the Dint of Errors in ſuch a Conſtitution, as we ſuppoſe.

The *ſeven thouſand in Iſrael* did not in far greater Corruptions omit certainly all ſorts of publick Worſhip (beſides the *Temple-Worſhip at Jeruſalem*) and yet bowed not their *knee to Baal*, nor *kiſſed him.*

Groſs Corruptions are indeed poſitively to be refuſed and abhorred, ſuch as thoſe of that time, ſuch as thoſe of Popery, ſuch as are (all, though not *complete Popery*) yet too near it; leſſer Diſſatisfactions may be waryly avoided, and yet *National Religion*, as far own'd as we can without ſharing even in thoſe ſmaller Errors.

And it is ſome relief to us herein, that allthough it is evident National Laws cannot bind any mans Conſcience in Religion, any further than they agree in the ſenſe of that mans Conſcience with the Word of God; for they cannot ſave him harmleſs at the laſt Tribunal, and therefore in no Reaſon can bind him; yet I ſay it is a relief in that Obedience a ſober Chriſtian deſires to pay to Humane Laws, (ſo far as agrees with Scripture) and the regards he would yield to National Religion,

Religion, that he may well take the Benefit of any Connivence or Relaxation of Humane Laws, in their proſecution; as all men how Conſcientious ſoever concerning *Humane Laws*, do (we ſee every day) where the Law is not preſſing, nor the injury any, although it be no other but ordinary common liberty that is reſtrained; for if Authority be not deſpiſed, if publick Good be not incommoded, *Humane Laws* do not *bind the Conſcience* as *Divine Laws do*, and therefore much leſs in Religion, wherein (except Natural) their Power hath not a further obligation, than as the Conſcience is ſenſible of *Divine Authority* concurring: Thus then a man may without offence withdraw himſelf from ſuch obſervances, and yet joyn in *publick Worſhip*.

2. There are the *Cuſtoms* and *Uſages* of a *Nation* entring into their *publick Adminiſtrations of Religion*, as into other *National Solemnities*; there are their *Laws and Appointments* of what they think *Grave, Decent, Orderly, Rationally* promoting the *Knowledg of Chriſtian Religion*, with Condeſcenſion to the meaneſt Underſtandings of their people, and ſecurity for ſome parts of Divine Worſhip, to be certainly performed with that Advantage, as *Liturgies* and *reading Scripture*; and it may be added, theſe things may be intended as *Cementations* of men in *civil Government*, which is a lawful End, if it be a Subordinate End, and *regulated by the Higheſt*. Now though there ſhould be a miſtake in all this, yet upon the account of National Conjunction in *Divine Worſhip*, we ſhould Tolerate them to the utmoſt we can, or they may be interpreted into the nature of *civil Appointments*, *civil Order* and *Decency or National Cuſtom*.

For if nothing may be Tolerated, if nothing may
1 Cor. 13. 7. be favourably Interpreted, there is no uſe of *Charity* in thoſe Excellent Acts of it the *Apoſtle Records*, viz. *Charity believeth* and *hopeth all things*, that can with any *Symmetry* to *Truth* and *Diſcretion* be *hoped* or *believed: It beareth all things, it endureth all things* that can be *endured*, without our own ſin, though ſinful in others, as commanding with Rigor, or over-eſteeming *things not neceſſary*.

3. It ſeems by our Saviours Command to his Diſciples, to obſerve the *Phariſees Precepts*, ſpeaking out of *Moſes his chair*; and yet at other times to beware of
Mat. 23. 1. Mat. 16, 12. the *leaven of Phariſees*, which is expreſly expounded of the *leaven of Doctrine*, that a man may joyn in publick Acts of Worſhip, where the main part is of *Divine Inſtitution*, and yet not be ſo immers'd in the whole, but that he may ſeparate between the pure and corrupted parts in relation to himſelf by his own *private act*. And indeed if a man could not do this, I know not how he ſhould join in any Humane peformance, as I have noted before; or how he ſhould allow his own worſhip of God, ſeeing he muſt needs *condemn himſelf* in *Particulars*, wherein he *allows* himſelf in the *general*; every thing Humane, being imperfect. I know it may be ſaid, There is a difference betwixt evils of *unavoidable incurſion*, and thoſe that are *fram'd* and *deliberated* into a *Conſtitution*.

But even in this caſe it appears, a man is under no neceſſity, when he joins with the ſolemn actions of others, to take all things in the ſenſe they do when there is a good and lawful account of ſuch actions, beſides their ill ones.

There is nothing more abhor'd by Scripture, than eating *things offer'd to Idols*, in the ſenſe, and with the *conſcience* of thoſe that offer'd to the *Idols*. And yet the

the *Apoſtle* allows the *freedom* of *eating things ſo offer'd, and even in an Idols-Temple*, where a Chriſtian has *the knowledg* that an *Idol is nothing in the world*, and there is not any other in danger to be *ſcandaliz'd* or *drawn into ſin*, that has not that *knowledg*, and yet is *imbolden'd* to *eat with conſcience of the Idol.* 1 Cor 8. 10.

4. A very great good to be donce or received, will recommend to us the uſe of things unneceſſary, without an eye to that good, and in ſome caſes unlawful and forbidden, as appears by what the *Apoſtle* ſays, *That to the Jew he became as a Jew; to them under the Law*, as under the Law, &c. *that by all means he might ſave ſome.*

It appears too by what he did in the Circumciſing *Timothy*, by his intending and relaxing his Diſcourſe concerning *Jewiſh* Rites. Act. 16. 3. Act. 21. 26.

It appears by our Saviours commanding the Diſciples *hearing* the *Phariſees*, though they endangered themſelves with the *leaven*, ſo that had it not been for the regard and reverence due *to Moſes his Chair*, in all proportion of reaſon *our Saviour* had not allowed it.

And whereas our Saviour was at other times very ſevere, as in *the Tradition of waſhing hands*, as in the *young mans calling him good*; and the Apoſtle concerning *Circumciſion and Jewiſh Rites*; it was upon great accounts of preſerving pure and ſafe the main points and deſign of *True Religion* and *Chriſtianity*, when they were in danger. Mat. 15. 1, &c. Mat. 19. 17. Gal. 5. 2. & 4. 9, 10.

And this is the firſt Conſideration I have propoſ'd, with the ſeveral Branches of it; not that I have any thing, as the Apoſtle ſaid, to *accuſe my Nation of* by all means to be ſhun'd with abhorrence. But ſuppoſing what may be objected againſt its conſtitution, relating to Divine Worſhip. Act. 28. 19.

Nor on the other ſide, that I would ſo much as intimate any enforcement upon *Diſſenters* (gainſt which I have

have argued ſo far) except that of Scripture-argument, with ſatisfaction to doubts.

Conſid. 2. But if a man cannot run the line of National Worſhip, it is good yet to take the utmoſt advantage we can of the Gifts Chriſt hath given to men *in the publick National* Miniſtry; who would at a cheap rate loſe the benefit of *many great lights* God hath at this very day ſet up in the *Engliſh* Nation, men who both by their *Holy Lives*, and *great abilities*, have adorn'd *the Doctrine of God our Saviour*, Bulwarks againſt Atheiſm and Antichriſtianiſm.

I profeſs for my ſelf, though I moſt heartily pray to God for the removal of all that offends either, of either name; and that there were a *High way out of the Churches and Congregations of Conformiſts*, into thoſe of the *Nonconformiſt*, and ſo back again; or rather that the Diſtinction were wholly removed; yet I would not upon any of the rates (ſet as neceſſary at this time to enjoy their excellent Labours) loſe the benefit of either; ſeeing in both there reſounds that *Glorious Goſpel* of *God our Saviour*, in great excellency, according *to the Talents committed to each.*

3. It is good to take off all ſuſpition and diſguſt of *Magiſtracy* from *Religion*, occaſion'd by diſtance from him in *publick Adminiſtrations*, that there may be no appearance of *Faction*, *Sedition*, *love of Difference*, *Affectation of Singularity*, ſo far as we can fly this Imputation *with ſafe conſcience towards God*, it is beſt to be done to the utmoſt; when it cannot, to manage our *Diſſents* with exceeding *Modeſty* and *Humility*.

Beſides, in relation to People in general, we are to conſider how National Uſages prevail on them, transform men into all appearances of Habit, Geſture, and ſuch like Circumſtances; *National Decency* is a great Circumſtance in *Religious Service*, as I obſerve from the

Apoſtles

Apoſtles Diſcourſe, 1 *Cor.* 11. 16. Every thing *Unnational* is ready to be turned into *Ridicule*; when therefore we can have the due *Licenſe of Conſcience*, the Decency, Gravity, and order of our *Native Country*, is of very great *Reverence*.

Laſtly, Incompliance with our Nation, is very ready to render our ſpirits moroſe, angry, vehement, zealous of ſmall things in our own way; too *ſevere* and *rigid* againſt *ſmall things* in others; and in fine, to make us Bigots of another kind, given to mode in another dreſs of things, and Ceremonialiſts of *another Order*.

And ſo I paſs to the other ſide of Things, and to make this modeſt Recommendation of Three Conſiderations to thoſe of *National Conformity*.

1. That they be not *zealouſly intent*, and overwarm about the things themſelves, wherein *Proteſtants* among us diſagree. For it is evident, they are not of worth to ſupport any great eſteem; nor can there be a greater Argument againſt them, than are *intemperate heat* for them. This is to make them ſomething in *Chriſtian Religion*, which is to turn them into a like thing with the *Jewiſh Conciſion*; becauſe it is with the great injury of Chriſtianity when ſuch Things are over-rated, and the turning the things themſelves out of that middle place God hath ſet them in, into a much *worſe*.

And to transfer the whole load of our too great heat for them upon *Subjection* to *Magiſtrates*, *Order*, *Decency*, is a plain confeſſion, the things themſelves are of no worth, and to charge thoſe other great Names with a weight too great and unjuſt to lay upon them, *viz.* to make them ſerve under all the evils of *wrath*, *clamor*, *malignity*, *oppreſſion of men in their Conſciences* and *Eſtates*. It is *to preſs them as a cart is preſt with ſheaves*, and yet no *wheat* is brought into the *Garner*; there is no *wealth increas'd to Magiſtracy*, *Order* or *Decency*,

cency, while all thoſe *valuable things*, *Love*, *Peace*, *Univerſal ſatisfaction* are ſold for them.

2. Bigottry even in a *National way*, doth as much unman men, abate from the excellency of their minds, the goodneſs of their temper, the gravity and becomingneſs of the *Mene* in Religion, and grows as contemptible and ſervile as the ſame evil in any other way.

3. What great likelihood is there, a Nation may ſometime without *violence*, without any thing of *Faction*, *Sedition*, *Tumult*, or *Fanaticiſm*, conſent to change this outward face of *Religious Adminiſtration?* and then how many *Zealots* for it will be poſting to the newer Conſtitution? and how mean and pitiful will it be (not to deſert the things, for that is no more than *changing*, that which is *changeable* but) to deſert what they have been *zealous* of, which is apt to look *Irreligious*, *Hypocritick*, even almoſt *Atheiſtick?* And ſuppoſe men continue their *zeal*, it looks but like the ſecond childiſhneſs of old age, that cannot part with the trifles it hath been ſo long us'd to. I do not ſpeak this as if I thought *Religious Adminiſtrations*, ſhould vary *Faſhions* as often as men do *Habits*; but till we bring them up to that ſtate which cannot *be ſhaken*, that certainty of *Divine Inſtitution*, *Pure*, *Natural*, *Rational Decency*, join'd with that of the very *Country* and *Nation* it *ſelf*; we ſhall never be ſure but that which may be *ſhaken*, *will be ſhaken*, that the *things only that cannot*, may remain. *Antiquitas ſeculi juventus Mundi.* The world grows, and will grow more vigorous and manly by its age. We ſee a new mode of Diſcourſe of Sermons grows up every age; nay too, much a new *faſhion of Divinity*, that can by no means endure *change*, it being